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THE HOLLOW  
MOUNTAIN

**287**

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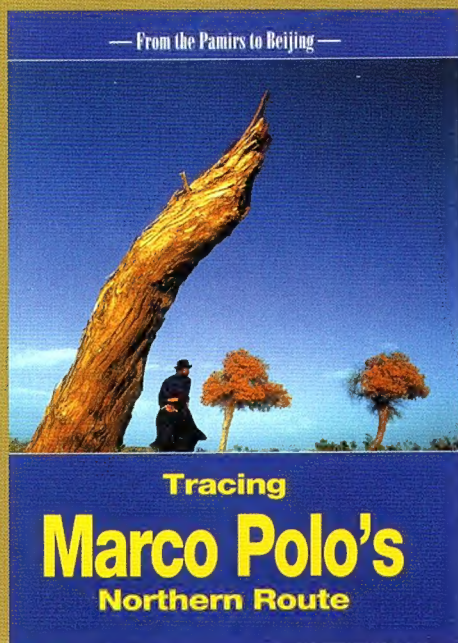
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# Photographic & Practical Guides for Your China Tours

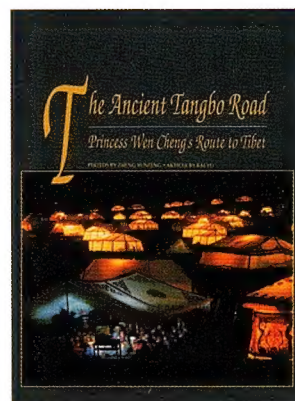
Before you set off for your perfect journey, you may have to prepare your itinerary carefully. Each of the following recommended readings offers different types of information which cater to our readers' various interests: exploring, photography, or tourist information. They will be great guides to your China tours.



## Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

A record of an 80-day journey in which our authors drive their jeep 12,000 km long through the northern regions of China following in the footsteps of Marco Polo's historic journey from the Pamir Highland to Beijing. In a medley of images and words, we present you with the fascinating scenery and various ways of life in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet.

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## The Ancient Tangbo Road

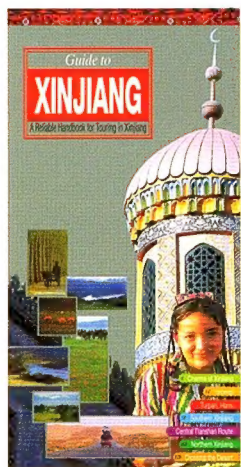
Covering four provinces including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ancient Tangbo Road was created on the map when Princess Wen Cheng was sent as a bride to Luoxie (present-day Lhasa) during the Tang Dynasty. Our photographers and writers, who have followed this arduous route, present you the graceful sights and unique ethnic customs on the way.

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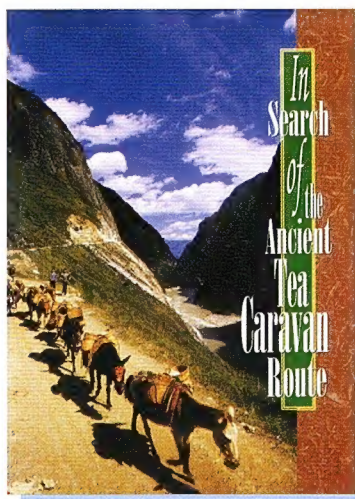
## In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The ancient Tea Caravan Route can be traced back to 2,000 years ago, starting from Xishuangbanna at China's southwestern end, passing through boundless forests and valleys to the Sino-Indian, Nepalese and Sikkimese borders on Tibet, the "Roof of the World".

This book is not-to-be-missed by every daring adventurer.



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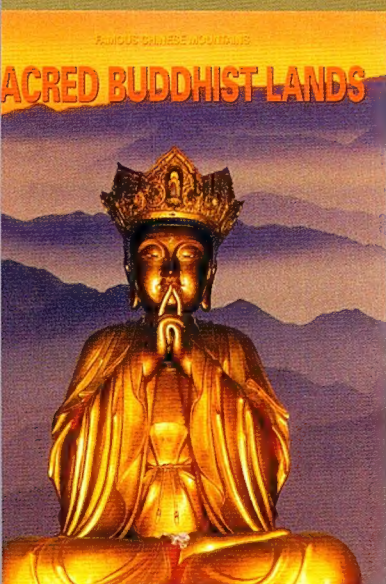


## Guide to Xinjiang

This book is especially designated for DIY travellers who desire to explore the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There are detailed introduction to scenic spots in five main areas in Xinjiang including Ürümqi, Turpan, Southern and Northern Xinjiang, and Central Tianshan. Practical tourist information on accommodation, ticketing, shopping, local specialty, as well as travel tips are covered.

**HK\$96**





## Sacred Buddhist Lands

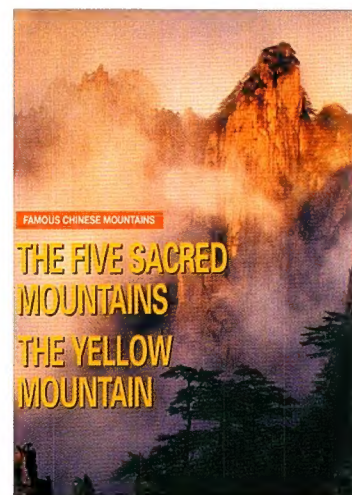
Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. And going deep in the mountains and far away from civilization is an ideal place for retreat. Belonging to the four Bodhisattvas respectively, the four most famous Buddhist mountains — Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo and Emei — are nestled with numerous monasteries and nunneries which have been worshipped by pilgrims for thousands of years. Tourists to these places will totally be soaked in "Kingdoms of Buddhism".

**HK\$156**

## The Five Sacred Mountains The Yellow Mountain

Located in five provinces in China, every of the Five Sacred Mountains — Taishan, Hengshan, Songshan, Hengshan and Huashan — has its magnificent natural and cultural landscapes. Besides, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), is also famous for its spectacular rocks, pine trees, and sea of clouds. It will be a great enjoyment in reading both the detailed text and remarkable images by our experienced photographers as recorded in this book.

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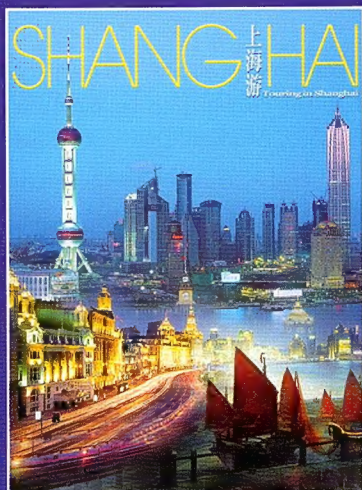
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## Shanghai

has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city

through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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*Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui*

Located where the three geological regions of East Asia, South Asia and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau meet, the site of Yunnan's Three Parallel Rivers is representative of rare alpine landforms and their evolution, and one of the richest biodiversity areas in the world.

**China**  
CHINA TOURISM



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*Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong*

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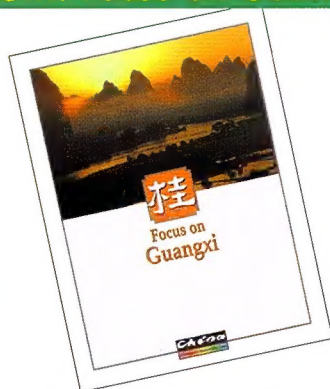
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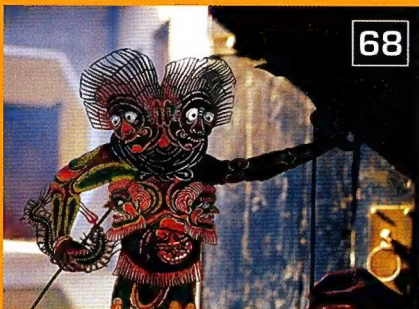
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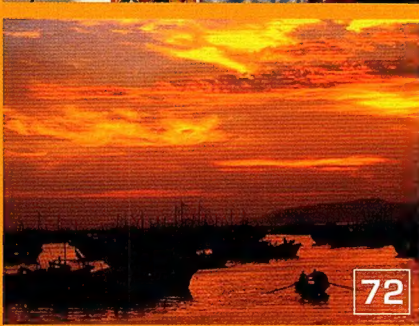
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## FROM THE EDITOR

# What's Your Dream Adventure?

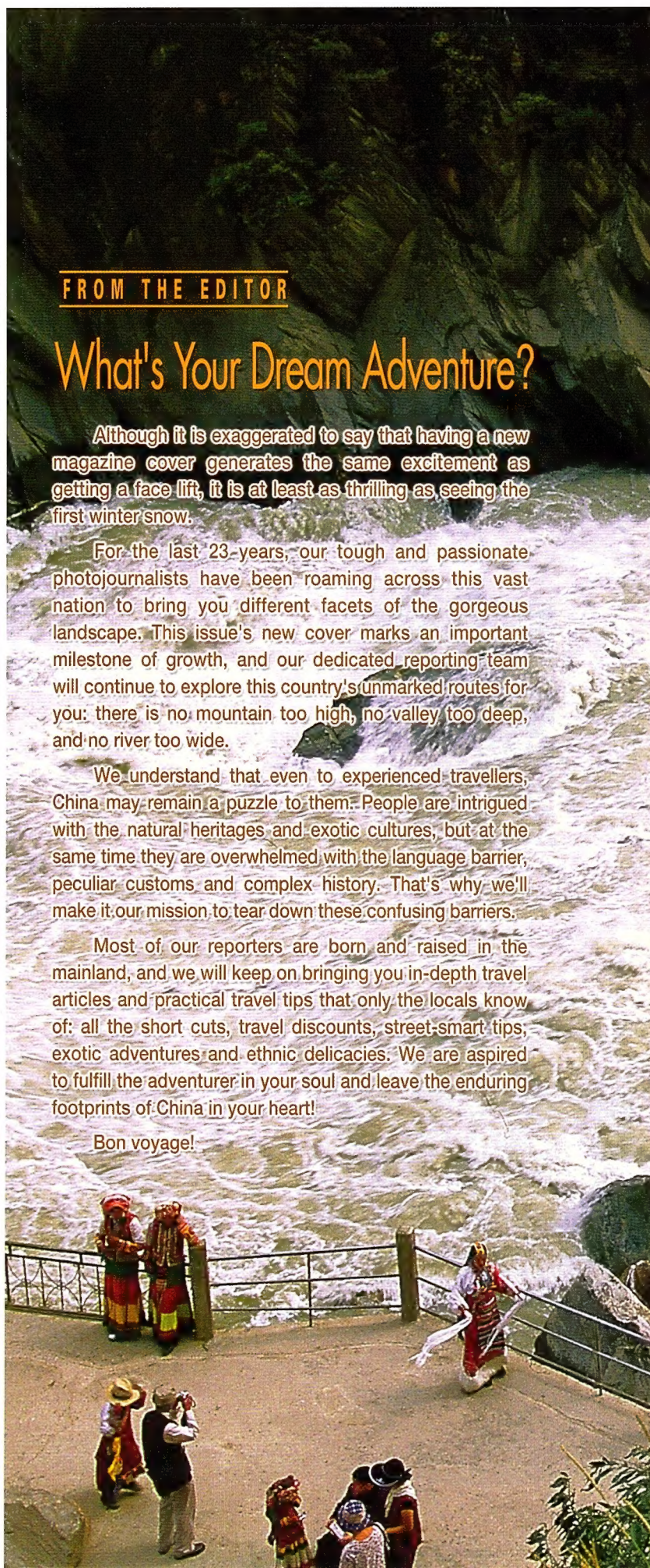
Although it is exaggerated to say that having a new magazine cover generates the same excitement as getting a face lift, it is at least as thrilling as seeing the first winter snow.

For the last 23 years, our tough and passionate photojournalists have been roaming across this vast nation to bring you different facets of the gorgeous landscape. This issue's new cover marks an important milestone of growth, and our dedicated reporting team will continue to explore this country's unmarked routes for you: there is no mountain too high, no valley too deep, and no river too wide.

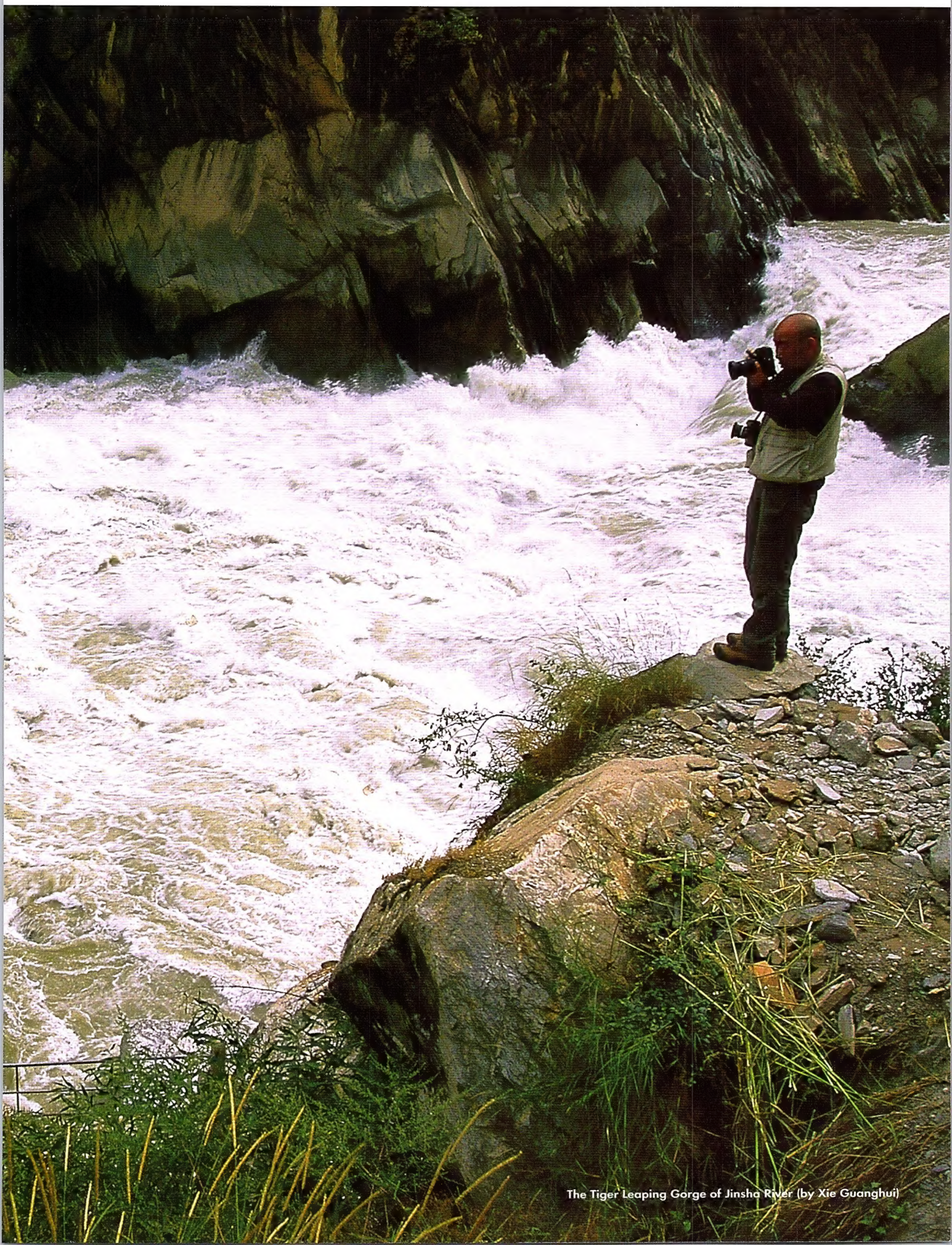
We understand that even to experienced travellers, China may remain a puzzle to them. People are intrigued with the natural heritages and exotic cultures, but at the same time they are overwhelmed with the language barrier, peculiar customs and complex history. That's why we'll make it our mission to tear down these confusing barriers.

Most of our reporters are born and raised in the mainland, and we will keep on bringing you in-depth travel articles and practical travel tips that only the locals know of: all the short cuts, travel discounts, street-smart tips; exotic adventures and ethnic delicacies. We are aspired to fulfill the adventurer in your soul and leave the enduring footprints of China in your heart!

Bon voyage!







The Tiger Leaping Gorge of Jinsha River (by Xie Guanghui)





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## JUN/JUL


**Jul 22**  
**Xining, Qinghai Province**

Tens of thousands of singers and participants from the Hui, Dongxiang and Bao'an ethnic groups come to Lotus Hill to sing folk songs during the **The Qinghai Double-Six Folk Song Fair**. Love is a major theme of such songs, which are characterised by soul-stirring tunes full of idyllic flavour.

Many other activities such as mountaineering, village theatrical performances and commodity fairs will also be held.

[http://www.china-window.com.cn/qinghai\\_w/folk/indexe.html](http://www.china-window.com.cn/qinghai_w/folk/indexe.html)

**Jun 5 - 28**  
**Hong Kong**

The Italian community in HK celebrates all their country has to offer with **Italy: Quality & Lifestyle**. There are exciting programs such as Italian Milan fashion and jewellery shows, cuisine festival, arts festival (Leonardo da Vinci Machine Exhibition), films, cars (Ferraris), live music performances, wine talk, coffee exhibition, chef cooking demonstration, football game, etc.

[http://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/showtime/festivals/st\\_arts\\_ital.html](http://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/showtime/festivals/st_arts_ital.html)

**Jul 15 - Aug 15**  
**Old tobacco barns and Cising Lake, Hualien, Taiwan**

Eastern Taiwan is known as "marble country"; wherever you look you would see beautiful stones. Marble is inseparable from stone-carving arts, and the **Stone Arts Carnival** brings in international artists to blend their work with the unique natural and cultural resources of eastern Taiwan. The festival encompasses exhibits of stone art as well as carving demonstrations by master artists.

**Jul to Aug**  
**Zunyi City, Maotai Township in Renhuai, and the Shizhang Caves in Chishui, Guizhou Province**

An opening ceremony and large recreational performances are held during the **China Guizhou Famous Liquor and Wine Festival**. Tourists may visit the Zunyi Museum of Liquor and Wine and the Maotai Brewery, home of China's most famous Baijiu, or "white spirit". Other tourist attractions include the site of China's historical Zunyi Meeting and the waterfalls at the Shizhang Caves.

[http://www.chinesesource.com/details.cfm?id=15703&cat\\_id=2](http://www.chinesesource.com/details.cfm?id=15703&cat_id=2)


**Jul 25-Aug 25**  
**Taihua Town, Wutai County, Shanxi Province**

Since ancient times the Wutai Mountain has been a site of temple fairs. With the passing of time, these temple fairs have gradually evolved into the **Wutai Mountain International Tourist Month**, which sets the stage for displaying the Wutai Mountain as one of China's four major Buddhist mountain sanctuaries and its wealth of ancient sites and cultural artifacts.

During this month, the entire mountain is enshrouded in the mystery of religious atmosphere, as monks from all over the country gather at Taihua Town performing large-scale Buddhist ritualistic ceremonies.

<http://www.world66.com/asia/northeastasia/china/shanxiprovince/mtwutai>

**Jul 15**  
**Inner Mongolia**

In Mongolian, Nadam means "game". The **Nadam Fair** is a traditional gathering of Mongolians in Inner Mongolia, which is held annually in July or August when the pastures are at their greenest, and it usually lasts between three to ten days. The festival is celebrated with horse racing, wrestling, archery and other competitions as well as theatrical performances.

Tourists may also enjoy an imperial banquet, visit the hot spring forest, participate in the horse racing, local wedding ceremonies, and memorial ceremony at the Mausoleum of Genghis Khan.

<http://www.linktrip.com/innermongolia/>


**Jul 1- Jul 13**  
**Yunlin County, Taiwan**

With top performers from all over the world participating in the **Yunlin International Puppet Festival**, this event will exhibit the essence of the puppeteer's art. Those who enjoy traditional art should not be missed!





## Struggling Wildlife Parks

Wildlife parks across China are now under great pressure as officials fear increasing competition and shrinking tourists will further overshadow the industry's future.

Ending their transient boom and prosperity after their establishment, the wildlife parks in China, mostly privately run, are now struggling due to over construction.

Market analysts say it is difficult for China's wildlife parks to repay their investment as most of them invested over 100 million yuan (about US \$12 million) when they were built.

Over the past 10 years, China has expanded its wildlife parks from zero to currently 30 nationwide, a number exceeding market demands.

Chongqing Wildlife World, a major wild animal park in the capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, had to recently close its office because of the fierce competition between similar wildlife parks in the neighbouring provinces. This was in sharp contrast to 2001 when the park opened as southwest China's only wildlife park with a ticket revenue amounting to 60 million yuan (about US \$7 million) in the first year. The park is now short of more than 3 million yuan every year after revenue dropped to about 25 million yuan (US \$3 million). At least two thirds of the domestic wildlife parks had to close.

Among China's current 30 wildlife parks, only 15 had permission and approval from the State Administration of Forestry, the country's top agency in charge of wildlife issues. According to China's regulations, the establishment of wildlife parks raising rare animals under first-priority state protection should first be approved by the State Administration of Forestry (SAF). However, zoos raising animals under second-priority state protection can be built with the province-level forestry departments' examination and approval. Such procedures of examination and approval have led to the expansion of China's wildlife parks.

Animal activists fear the shortage of income will probably threaten the survival of park animals. To survive fierce competition, integration via market strengthening might be a way out for wildlife parks, while the government should strictly supervise the distribution of parks and protect the animals' living standards.

## China's Longest Funicular Railway

China's longest funicular railway, 2,700 m in length, was put in use in May on the scenic Mingyue (Bright Moon) Mountain, Yichun City in eastern China's Jiangxi Province.

The mountain itself was designated a state-level forest park for its marvelous cliffs, waterfalls, pines and stones, as well as rare birds and animals.

The cableway cost a total investment of 20 million yuan (US \$2 million) and has a vertical relative altitude of 1,100 m. It takes about 46 minutes for a one-way run.



## New Air Route Links Shenyang with Pyongyang

The direct flights between Shenyang, the provincial capital of Liaoning, and Pyongyang, capital of North Korea, was launched in May.

This was the fourth international air route that

Shenyang has launched in fewer than two months. The number of travellers between the two cities has been on the rise in recent years with increasing connections in the fields of economy, trade and culture between the two countries.

Statistics show that more than 80,000 people went to the North Korea via Dandong port of Liaoning Province in 2002. Despite the outbreak of SARS last year, over 30,000 went to the North Korea via Dandong the same year.

Shenyang currently operates 89 international and regional air routes and 55 domestic lines.





Shanghai Pudong International Airport

## Airport Donated Confiscated Alcohol to Charity

Project Hope, a charitable organisation that financially helps poor children to go to school, recently received a unique donation of 10,000 bottles of liquor and wine from Shanghai Pudong International Airport.

The booze was donated by the local airport authority, which has collected thousands of bottles from airline

passengers unaware of a ban on carrying alcohol on commercial flights. The liquor will be auctioned off to raise money for the charity.

China's civil aviation authority announced a rule early last year on banning air travellers from taking wine or liquor on board planes with them, except for bottles purchased at a duty free shop. Each Passenger can carry up to two bottles in his or her checked baggage. The airport will continue to donate confiscated bottles to Project Hope.

## Army Tours for Visitors

The Beijing Tourism Administration is currently negotiating with military authorities to open more special visiting areas for tourists. The anticipated tours would also include watching the troops practice drill and ceremony.

At present, the People's Liberation Army has 2.5 million troops. Jiang Zemin, chairman of the China Military Commission, announced that the country would cut troop strength by 200,000 in 2005. During the nation's ninth reduction in force, from 1997 - 2000, 500,000 soldiers were demobilised.

When the first reduction in force was implemented in May 1950, the year following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the PLA was 5.5 million strong. However, the downsizing was suspended when the Korean War broke out, and the Chinese army swelled to its peak of 6.3 million in October 1951. China has implemented nine reductions in force since the founding of the People's Republic of China.



Thousand Buddha Mountain, Jinan, Shandong Province

## Jinan Int'l Airport Being Expanded

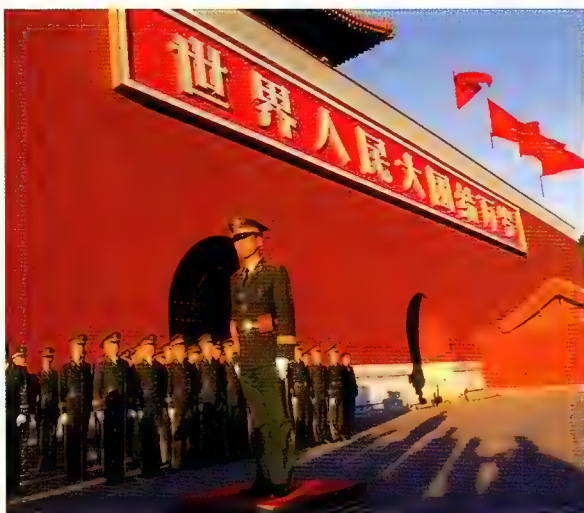
The International Airport in Jinan, capital of east China's Shandong Province, will take on a new look when an expansion project is completed at the end of the year.

The expansion project, at cost of 1.6 billion yuan (US \$200 million), started in late 2002. The project includes an 80,000 m<sup>2</sup> terminal building with 13 boarding gates and an annual handling capacity of 8 million passengers, 230,000-m<sup>2</sup> parking aprons capable of accommodating 40 planes and a navigation building and tower.

The current terminal building is far away from meeting growing traffic demand as it was designed to handle 800,000 passengers a year. Passenger flow at the airport hit 1.74 million in 2003, and the figure is expected to rise to 2 million this year, with the volume of cargo rising from 32,000 tn to 38,000 tn during the same period.

During the first quarter of the year, the airport reported a net profit of more than 7 million yuan (US \$843,000), the first profit recorded by the airport in 12 years.

The airport is expected to earn about 20 million yuan (US \$2.4 million) in profits this year.





## First Subway Train Arrived in Shenzhen

**Guangdong** The first train for the Shenzhen Metro system finally arrived in April. The train, with six carriages, can accommodate more than 2,900 passengers at a maximum speed of 80 km/h.

The high capacity train is based on the latest modular technology. It incorporates advanced Bombardier Transportation designs, such as the modular aluminum car body, state-of-the-art propulsion and high performance bogeys.

The agreement also said the remaining 18 trains would be built in Changchun, Jilin Province in Northeast China, with the last train to be delivered by December 2005.

The 21.8 km Phase I of the Shenzhen Metro runs between Shenzhen Railway Station and the Window of the World.

## Travel Passports of Shaoguan

**Guangdong** Since April, Shaoguan City's tourism administration has issued travel "passports" to attract travellers. Costing only 100 yuan (US \$12), the "passport" will enable travellers to visit all tourist attractions in Shaoguan free of charge for a year. The cost of admission to the tourist attractions would otherwise be at least three times as much. Travellers can obtain the "passports", which would bear their names and identification card numbers, from travel agencies in the city.

Shaoguan is thought to be the first city in the country to offer a one-stop charge for all the city's tourist attractions. The "passport" has other advantages, such as more discounts at some sightseeing places near Shaoguan.

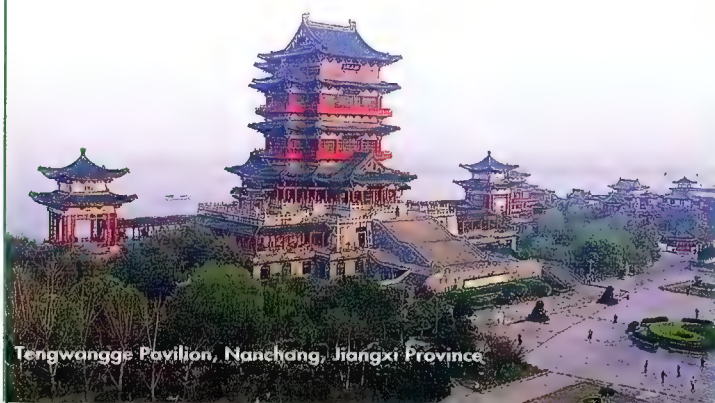
## New Air Route to Link Singapore & Jiangxi Province

**Jiangxi** Nanchang City, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province, opened the first international air link in the province to Singapore at the end of April.

The flight adopts a Boeing 757 passenger plane which can carry 200 passengers. It shuttles three times every week via Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province.

Currently, Nanchang has about 190 weekly flights to 19 Chinese cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Jiangxi Province lies on the southern bank of the Yangtze River, China's longest river. It has the country's biggest freshwater lake, Lake Poyang, Lushan Mountain, a world heritage site, and the Jinggang mountains, the first base area of the Communist-led revolution. The porcelains of Jingdezhen City are famous on the world market.



Tengwangge Pavilion, Nanchang, Jiangxi Province



West Lake, Hangzhou

## Luxury Taxis On the Road in Hangzhou

**Zhejiang** Forget about the humble China-made taxis, residents of east China's Hangzhou city will soon have the luxury of catching a ride in the likes of a BMW or Mercedes Benz.

The city is adding 100 luxury taxis, as part of the 500 new cabs that will be on the road this year. The price of these luxury taxis will initially be the same as the old ones, with a starting price of 10 yuan, or US \$1.2, then 2 yuan per kilometre.

## Guangzhou Airport to Relocate

**Guangdong** Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport in south China is set to move to its new location, despite some expected difficulties.

The new airport is greatly improved, with state-of-the-art security and luggage systems and clearly marked terminals. Other facilities including hotels, restaurants, shops and even post offices will be available when the new airport is put into use.

Airport authorities have worked out an emergency plan to deal with any problems that occur during the relocation.

## Wenchang and Hong Kong Linked by Bus

**Hainan** People in Wenchang, Hainan Province, can now go to Hong Kong by bus.

The whole journey covers 920 km and takes about 12 hours.

Wenchang is the hometown of many overseas Chinese. Every month about 1,000 people there apply to go to Hong Kong for business or visiting family, and quite a few Wenchang people in Hong Kong return home to visit their families or sightseeing.



Wenchang, Hainan Province





## Better Banking Service Wanted

**Guangdong** Some Australian tourists suggested that Shenzhen City to upgrade its banking service for foreign visitors.

Two tourists said that they enjoyed shopping in Shenzhen and noticed that there were English labels for products in shopping malls, which were really helpful. However, they were frustrated because the ATMs there did not accept Master and Visa cards. It was inconvenient for them because they were not used to carrying large amount of cash. There was only one HSBC outlet in Luohu District where they could withdraw money from their Australian accounts.

## Taoist Temple to Move Back to Original Site

**Shanghai** Baiyunguan Taoist Temple, which was built in 1882, will be moved two kilometres north to its original site on Xilinhou Road in Nanshi District.

Having more than 120 years of history, the Baiyunguan Taoist Temple is the most famous Taoist building in Shanghai.

The new site is next to the three-story Dajingge Pavilion, which was erected beside the Shanghai Old City Wall during the Ming Dynasty. With the city's rapid development, protecting unique old buildings has become an important task for the city government. The old site of the Baiyunguan Temple will be razed to make way for a massive residential area with easy access to the World Expo site.

The work on moving the temple began last year, and the final move should be finished by August. The whole project is expected to cost nearly 11.13 million yuan (US \$1.4 million) and occupy 1,600 m<sup>2</sup>.

## Largest Painted Pottery Museum Opened in Qinghai Province

**Qinghai** China's largest painted pottery museum with a collection of about 40,000 antique pieces opened in April in the northwestern Qinghai Province.

The Liuwan Museum of Ancient Painted Pottery is located in Ledu County and was named for its location on the ruins of the Liuwan tombs, where archeologists have unearthed more than 30,000 items of cultural heritage — including over 20,000 pieces of painted pottery — since the 1970s.

The museum opened its first antique show to the public, featuring 540 pieces of painted pottery dating back some 3,000 to 4,500 years. The Liuwan tombs, a large burial ground for members of a primitive clan, offers valuable materials representing four typical cultures in ancient China for archeologists to study ancient social structure.

Archeologists say sacrificial objects unearthed from the graves over the years — often stone axes, knives and chisels with males and pottery or stone spinning wheels, bone awls and needles with females — show that male members of the clan were mainly involved in social production whereas females were engaged solely in housework.

## Biggest Ferris Wheel Turned On in Shanghai

**Shanghai** People can now enjoy a bird's eye view of Shanghai's stunning night scene from the top of the country's biggest Ferris wheel, 108 m above the ground.

Just opened, its 63 air-conditioned cabins can accommodate 720 people in an hour.

And the wheel itself adds to the colour of the neon lit night: it uses new, energy efficient technology that can light it up in seven different glorious colours.

The Ferris wheel is open to 10:00 pm everyday, and the tickets cost 20 yuan (US \$2.5).

## HK Signed Air Services Agreement with Kuwait

**Hong Kong** Hong Kong signed an Air Services Agreement with the government of the State of Kuwait.

The Air Services Agreement provides a legal framework for the establishment of air links between Hong Kong and Kuwait. Hong Kong looked forward to closer ties in areas like trade, air services and tourism.



## Singapore Resumed SARS Checks on Chinese Flights

**Singapore** Singapore has reinstated temperature checks at Changi Airport for passengers arriving from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong following the new SARS cases found in China.

Doctors and health care institutions were alerted to look out for patients with SARS-like symptoms who have recently travelled to China, especially Beijing and Anhui, where two confirmed SARS cases have been reported within the last two weeks.

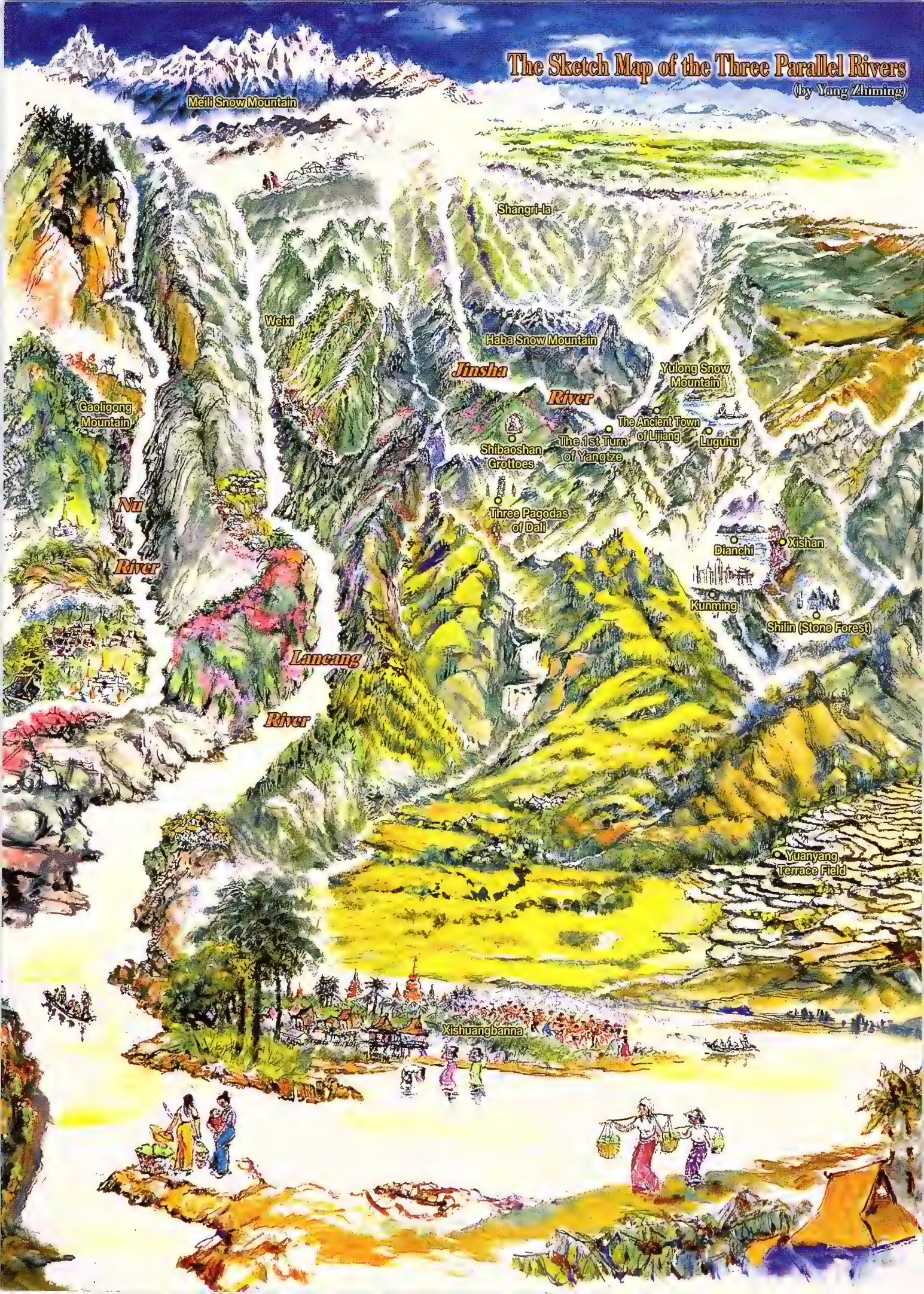
The passengers are given health alert notices to advise them on precautionary measures and good personal hygiene practices during their stay in Singapore.

Last year's SARS crisis killed 33 people in Singapore.



# The Sketch Map of the Three Parallel Rivers

(by Yang Zhiming)





# Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan

Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui

Most rivers in China run from west to east, with the exceptions of the Jinsha, Lancang, and Nu Rivers. They all flow across the Yunnan-Tibetan Plateau, and then take a south turn when impeded by mountain ranges. As such, they create a rare topography: three rivers winding side by side along deep rugged river valleys.

River valleys in the region are abyssal. The differences in depth can range between 2000-3000 m. The valley bottoms are richly and densely coated with plants and woods, the result of a typical sub-tropical climate. Yet the climatic conditions change greatly with the rising altitude. When ascending, we find a warm temperate zone, a temperate zone, a cold temperate zone and finally, the permanent snow-capped peaks accordingly.

The three rivers run very closely to each other in Yunnan for 170 km. The closest horizontal distance between the Jinsha and Lancang Rivers is 66 km, whereas the distance between the Lancang and Nu Rivers is 18.6 km. The three rivers eventually end in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Indian Ocean.









**T**he origin of Jinsha River is at Mt. Geladandong in the Tanggula Mountain ranges of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. The river flows southwards to the river mouth of Batang at Yushu. After running through Tibet to Yunnan, the river reaches Shigu at Lijiang County and takes a U-turn, waving goodbye to the Lancang and Nu Rivers. Then the Jinsha River takes its own path entering Sichuan Province. From there, it joins together with the tributaries of the Yalong, Dadu, Min, and Jialing Rivers. All finally merge into the grand Yangtze River. The 6300-km Yangtze, the longest in China, enters the East China Sea in Shanghai.

Moon Bay of Jinsha River is located alongside the Yunnan-Tibetan Highway. On the other side of the coast lies Derong County of Sichuan.



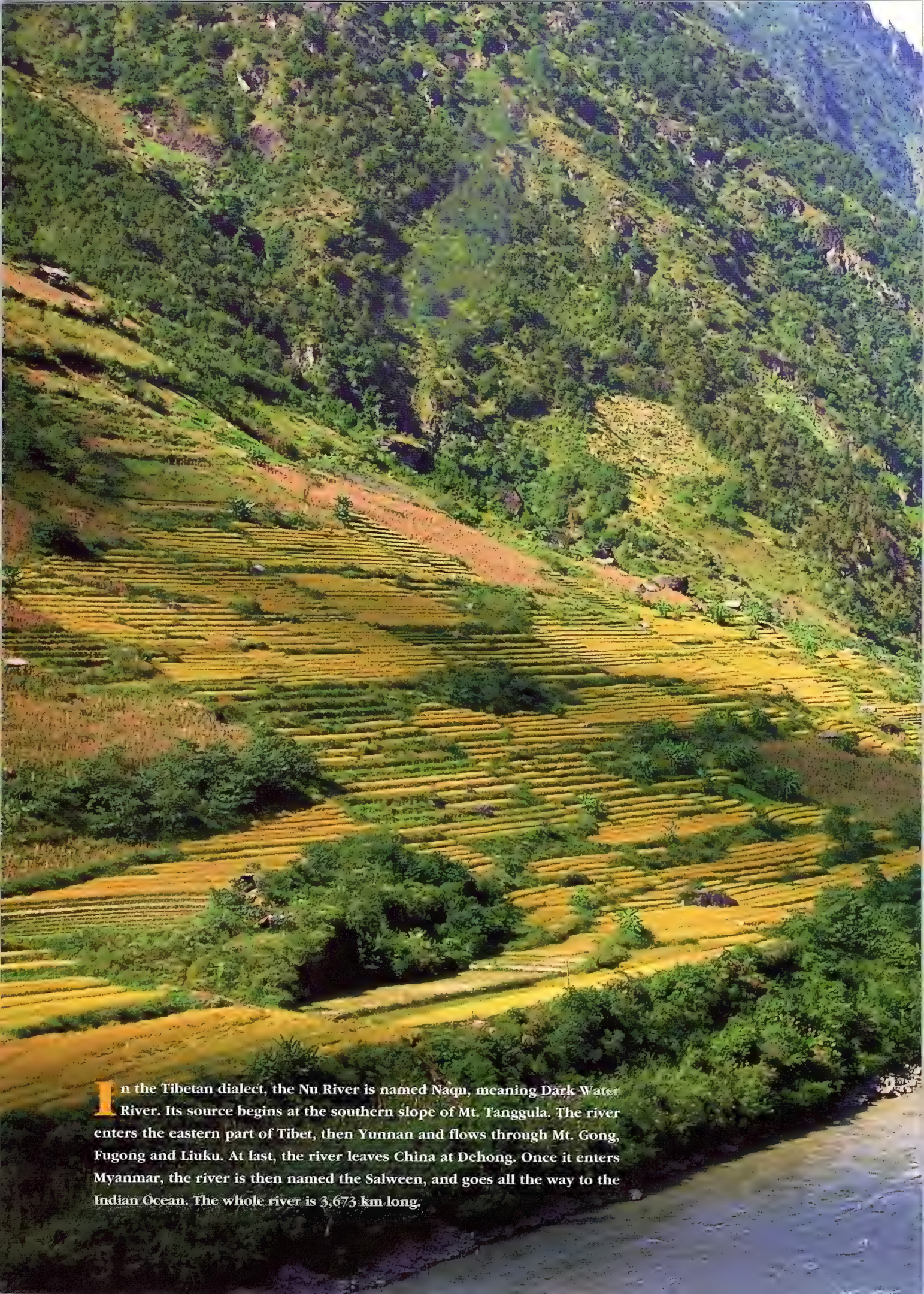


The valley of Lancang River is at about 2000m. Due to its warm and mild weather, both sides of the valley are full of terraced rice paddies.



**T**he upper course of the Lancang River is known as the Zhaqu and Angqu Rivers, both originating from the northeastern slopes of the Tanggula Mountain. The Zhaqu and Angqu Rivers meet at Changdu in Tibet, and share the name, Shuangqu River. When the river runs into Yunnan through Deqin, it adopts the name Lancang River. The river flows across 17 counties and towns, including Weixi, Laping, Baoshan, and Xishuangbanna. It then leaves the border of China at Menggala County (the river within the Chinese border is 2515 km long). Once out of China, it's renamed the Mekong River, flowing across Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and finally enters the South China Sea. The whole river is 5181 km long.





**I**n the Tibetan dialect, the Nu River is named Naqu, meaning Dark Water River. Its source begins at the southern slope of Mt. Tanggula. The river enters the eastern part of Tibet, then Yunnan and flows through Mt. Gong, Fugong and Liuku. At last, the river leaves China at Dehong. Once it enters Myanmar, the river is then named the Salween, and goes all the way to the Indian Ocean. The whole river is 3,673 km long.





The Nu river is the westernmost of the Three Parallel Rivers in Yunnan; its valley is also one of the most diversified biological zones in the world.





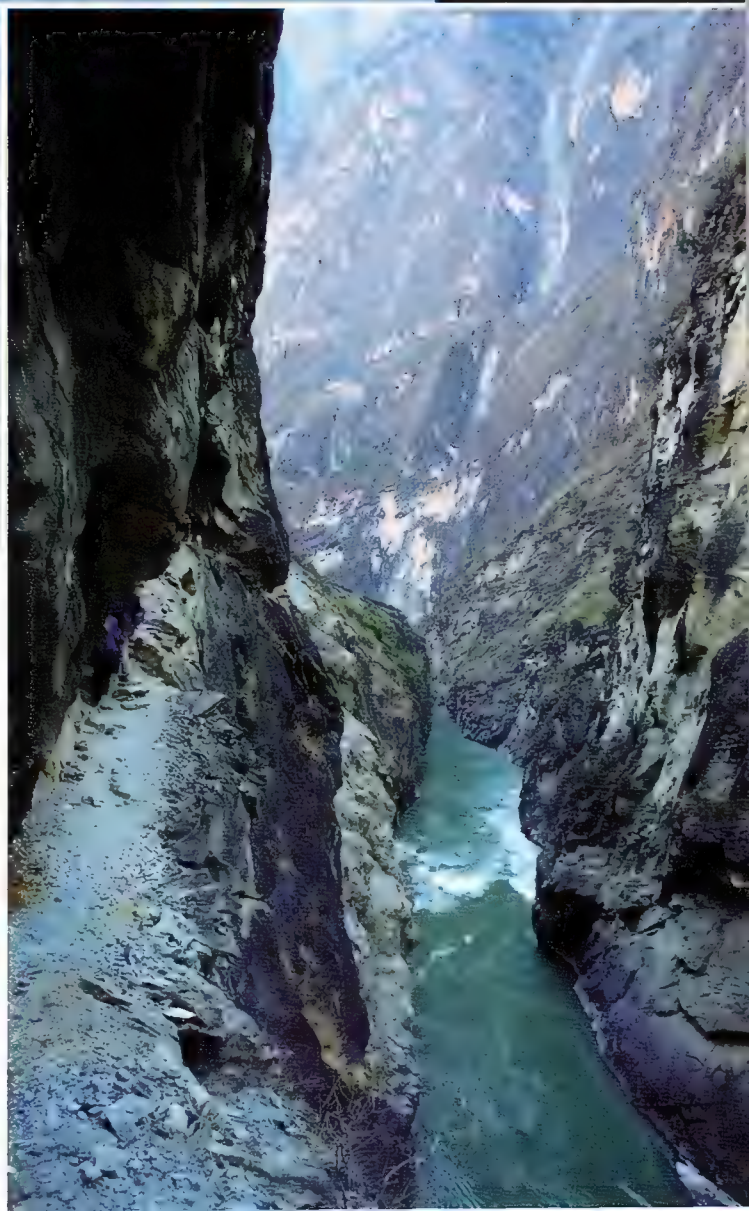
## A Tiger Leaping

# Jinsha River



**A**mong the Three Parallel Rivers, Jinsha River has the widest river valley, whereas Nu River has the narrowest. At 27° northern latitude, the altitude of the three rivers begins to drop from east to west. The Jinsha River is 2100 m above sea level, Lancang River 1900 m, and Nu River 1600 m. As the three river valleys get narrower and narrower, their vertical differences increase majestically.

In terms of sightseeing, the Jinsha River was developed first and the area has the best transport and travel facilities. But the downside of this greater development is that the environment degradation. The Nu River, on the other hand, is still in its infancy of development, and thus its environment is better preserved.







### The First North Turn of Yangtze

At dawn, our vehicle dashed across the tranquil city of Kunming and climbed up the Kunming-Dali Highway. At dusk, I arrived at Shigu, the so-called "First Bay of Yangtze". After flowing through the Yunnan Province for 170 km with the other two parallel rivers, the Jinsha River, turns east and flows across Yibin in Sichuan, and becomes the glorious Yangtze River — one of the cradles of Chinese culture.

The First Bay of the Yangtze River when viewed from above seemed very wide and smooth. The golden river wound across the silhouetted dark mountains. The far-away mountain ranges were enveloped in hazy mist.

Passing Shigu, the Jinsha River turns north and merges with the Shiduogang River. It then meanders right between Yulong Snow Mountain and Baha Snow Mountain. All of a sudden, the river valley narrows down as it descends. With so much energy stored up, the river becomes a rapid current flowing at a rate of seven to eight metres per second and thunders all the way to Hutiaoxia (Tiger Leaping Gorge).



1. This picture shows a part of the Jinsha River.
2. The dangerous paths of the Tiger Leaping Gorge
3. Jinsha River, the upper course of the Yangtze River, enters Yunnan from Tibet.
4. The grassland in Shangri-la is dotted with attractive orchids in October. Although they look nice, the poisonous flowers are not edible for cattle or sheep.





Tiger Leaping Gorge begins at Qiaot of Zhongdian in the south and ends at Daju of Lijiang County. Divided into three sections, the Upper, Middle and Lower Tiger Leaping Gorges; they plunge 213 m within 20 km, carving out 18 steep cliffs. To its south, Yulong Snow Mountain and Baha Snow Mountain are more than 3,000 m higher than the river. As such, visitors may break out in cold sweat and be taken aback by the deafening roar and chilled air when looking at the blade-like cliffs. The river in the deep valley becomes a cascade of white-tipped waves,

galloping down the cliffs, and hitting a gigantic piece of rock in the middle of the river. Such blow produces a deafening noise and shattering splashes. It was believed that a hunted tiger leaped across the river through that rock, and hence the name Tiger Leaping Gorge.

### **Cradle of Dongba Language**

Sanba is believed to be the cradle of Dongba Culture. Legend has it that in the mid-11th century, Dingbashiluo came to preach about the Dongba religion in Sanba. At the time, in the whole Naxi region, there were no Dongba scriptures. All the teachings were passed around verbally — so it could only reach a limited region. Yet, with the help of the disciples of Dingbashiluo, the first Dongba scripture, written in Naxi hieroglyphs, was born, aiding the spread of the religion tremendously. As a result, people regarded Dingbashiluo as the founder of Dongba religion. Sanba, hence, became the official cradle of Naxi's Dongba culture.

At the Baishuitai (White Water Terrace) scenic region, I saw more



than 10 "heavenly springs" on the hills. The springs poured out from the pool at Yingengyu Hill and gently flowed down, finally merging with Baishuitai. Viewing it from afar, it looked like a white waterfall, formed by milky cream, not water. When evaporated by the sun, the calcium carbonate in the water leaves white sediment behind. Over years, an unusual terrain was created. Having visited Baishuitai, I turned north, and passed through Zhongdian and Nixi. At last, I came to Benzilan, at the rim of the Jinsha River. Benzilan is situated about 2000 m above sea level, with mild climatic conditions. Both sides of the highway were dotted with many paddy fields.

Zanbahe (wooden lacquer containers) from Benzilan are famous in the region of Kangba. It is specially used for storing the staple food of Tibet,

## World Natural Heritage

On July 2, 2003, UNESCO held its 27th annual World Heritage Convention in Paris, where 31 experts from all over the world shared their research findings on China's Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas. They studied the topography, ecology, landscape and biology and gave a very precise evaluation. They all agreed to include the Three Parallel Rivers on the World Heritage List. This is the 29th World Heritage of China, also the largest World Heritage in China in terms of size.

A century ago, the Three Parallel Rivers region captured much attention around the world. Three French missionaries came to China and built a church in the remote area in Yunnan and collected a number of other highland plants to take home. From then on, the world's eyes were open to the Yunnan region.

In 1904, Professor Balfour of Edinburgh Botanical Gardens sent his assistant to Yunnan to collect plant species. Hundreds of valuable azalea species in Britain today were transplanted by him. In 1922, Austrian-American Explorer Joseph Rock came to China on assignment for the National Geographic magazine. He carried out scientific studies in northwest Yunnan for 27 years, where he collected huge quantities of information and left behind priceless photos.

"Lost Horizon", a novel written by the British novelist James Hilton, made "Shangri-la" a utopia. In the 1940s, Russian writer Peter Goulard published "The Forgotten Kingdom" after living in Lijiang for a decade. It is a lively record of Northwest Yunnan.

1. Shigu Village used to be a place much fought over. The Yangtze River makes a U-turn here and then flows northeast.
2. Legend has it that a fierce tiger leaped across the river through this rock, and this gave rise to the name: Tiger Leaping Gorge.
3. There is a drum-shaped white Jade tablet in Shigu (Stone Drum) Village.
4. Between Tiger Leaping Gorge and Baishuitai in Sanba stand some derelict little houses of the Yi minority. Villagers live in acute poverty here.
5. In Baishuitai in Sanba, almost all Naxi families plant apple trees in their yards. The red apples are too numerous to be all eaten, but the villagers don't sell them.



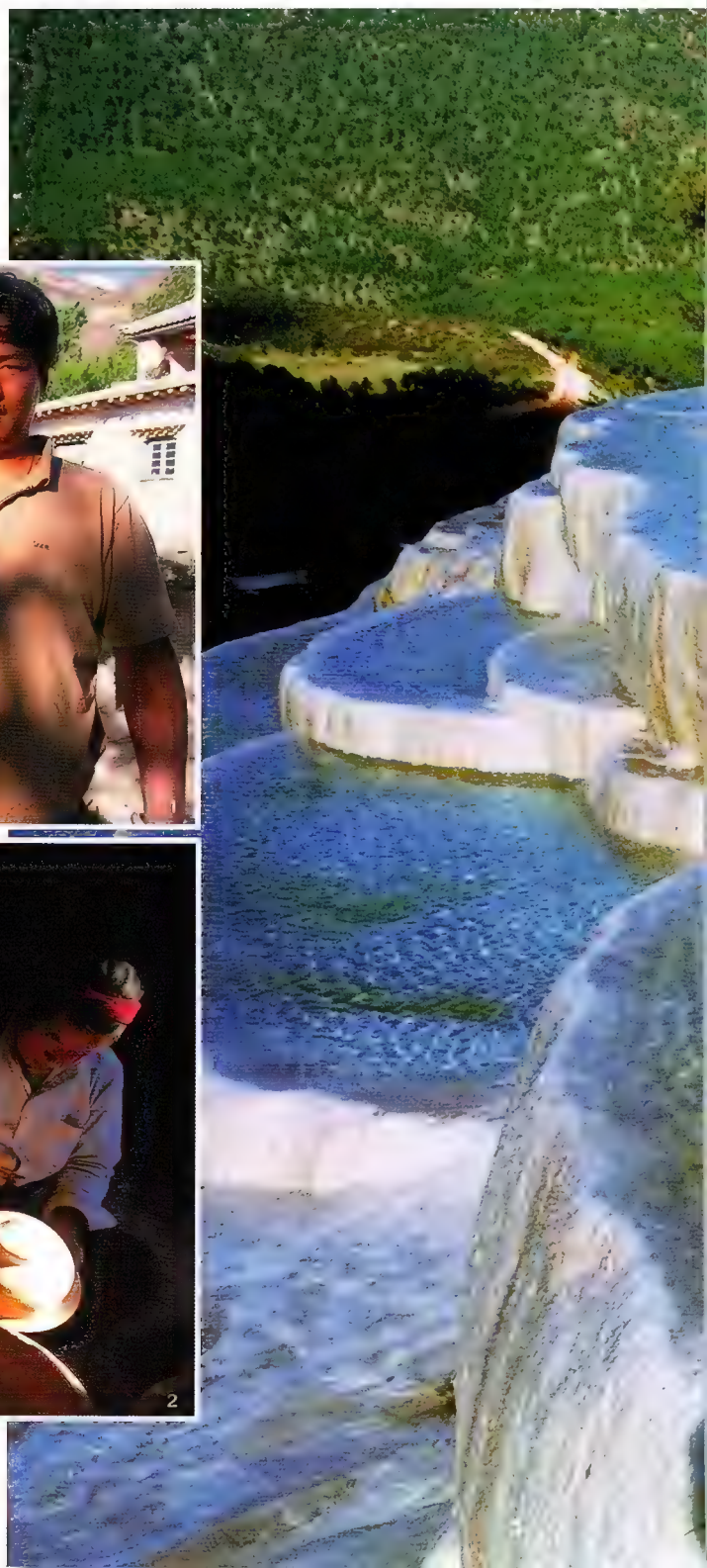


## A Tiger Leaping Jinsha River

Zanba (roasted qingke barley flour). Zanbahe come in different sizes, some as big as a basin, some as small as a bowl. Each set consists of four to five pieces, which fit neatly together. A basic necessity for a Tibetan family, Zanbahe is usually made meticulously and decorated with patterns. In the past, four households made Zanbahe, now only one remains, the Qishan family. This household lives in a typical Tibetan home. The first floor is occupied by livestock and the second story is reserved for people. When I entered Qishan's workshop, he was putting lacquer on a Zanbahe. Qishan's ancestors were all Zanbahe makers and the history was so long that Qishan could not tell when it began, all he remembered was that the skills were passed to him through generations.

### An Important Town on the Ancient Tea Road

Benzilan is an important town on the ancient tea road. Historically, it was flooded with caravans. Locals made a living by carrying tea, transporting salt, selling clothes and tobacco. After the main roads were built, vehicles have gradually replaced the large caravan teams. Nowadays, drivers usually stop to have lunch in Benzilan on their way between Zhongdian and Deqin. The crowd rattles the town at noon, and





after 2 p.m., the town is deserted again. On the other side of Benzilan rests Huahe Village of Derong County, Sichuan. The closest bridge, "Crouching Tiger Bridge", was about 12 km down the Benzilan River.

### **Meeting a Six-year-old Living Buddha**

Built in 1667, Dongzhulin Monastery was of the Gelugpa sect (one of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism), established by the fifth Dalai

1. Zanbahe is used for storing the main staple food of Tibet, Zanba. It comes in different sizes, some big, some small, but all fitting nicely together.
2. A set of good quality Zanbahe can be sold for about 300 yuan. The steps of crafting the wood, putting on the plaster, colouring, drawing patterns and painting the lacquer, take about seven days.
3. Baishuitai is formed when water is evaporated by sunlight, leaving the white calcium carbonate in the water behind. Over the years, the terrain of the largest spring in China was formed.





## A Tiger Leaping Jinsha River

Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso. I entered the main hall through a nicely carved arch. Dim inside, and the air filled with an oily aroma, there was an altar with different Buddha statues inside the hall. They were all carved with different expressions and features. The walls have been painted with stories of the Buddha. Some 30 to 40 monks in saffron cassocks were sitting on the mattress and reciting mantras. The worshippers were staring infatuatedly at the statues, sometimes walking solemnly, breath held, absorbing the serenity of the monastery. The Gelugpa sect emphasises the combining of the strengths of different sects, and on learning, contemplating, and reciting mantras.

The eighth living Buddha Geda in Dongzhulin Monastery is six

years old — the youngest living Buddha I have ever met. Two years ago, he was still a village kid from Derong in Sichuan. After the seventh living Buddha Geda passed away, Dongzhulin Monastery formed a team to search for the spiritual heir. Based on the prophecy of the deceased living Buddha, the team began the search in 2000. After three years of vigorous searching, they found this reincarnated child, Buddha Lurongdawa in Qugangding Village in Derong Town. Lurongdawa has a twin brother named Gerongciren. A reincarnated Buddha is seldom a twin. In general, when searching for the reincarnated Buddha, followers head in the direction prophesied by the living Buddha. And then the one believed to be the reincarnation has to match all the information prophesied. But how could one







childlike innocence. He loved to play, and had a lot of toys. Facing the devoted Tibetan worshippers, he always hit the heads of the worshippers with his hands. Despite that, the Tibetans still line up in long queues and dutifully bow down to him without a grudge. After all, he's still young and already has plenty of scriptures to study before he reaches school age. This little living Buddha still has to grow under the guidance of his teacher, Angwudanzeng.

determine if Lurongdawa or his twin brother was the living Buddha? The Lama in charge of the search told me that the whole search was done secretly. No one knew their identities, however, they carried some objects used daily by the former living Buddha. When the spiritual heir see the items, he would recognise them immediately, which is an important indication. On March 18, 2003, Lurongdawa saw his parents and siblings off, left Qugangding village and came to Dongzhulin as the eighth living Buddha Geda.

Reincarnation of the living Buddha is a special characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism, but one cannot become a living Buddha just through reincarnation. A Living Buddha is someone who has accumulated lots of wisdom, and is highly educated, with great integrity and moral beliefs. Basically, he's a manifestation of wisdom, a reincarnated monk. The eighth living Buddha Geda was still young, and full of



1. Meili Snow Mountain

2. The eighth Geda Living Buddha in Dongzhulin Monastery is six years old this year. Two years ago, he was still a village toddler from Derong town in Sichuan.

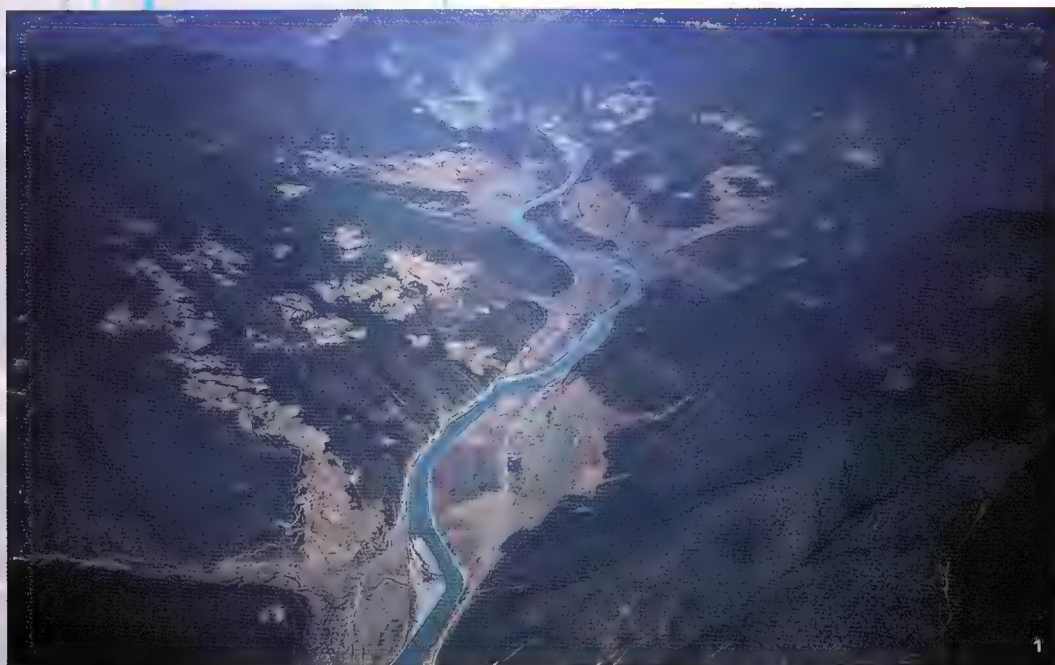
3. On the way to Shangri-la, this woman from the Yi minority is taking her child home to visit her family.





## The Sacred Summit Shining on

# Lancang River



**H**aving left Dongzhulin Monastery, the car started to climb again. Jinsha River through the rear mirror looked like a silver snake, which slowly disappeared. At the turn to the snowy mountain, our driver shouted out, "Ji Ji! Suo Suo! (meaning God is triumphant)." Rolling across the snow-capped mountains, the car headed down. Abruptly, we made a turn and in no time Deqin County came into view. In the Tibetan dialect, Deqin means a blessed place.

The location of the county centre of Deqin is very threatened by mudslides. Some people worry that it may become the Pompei of China one day. This threat has put the local government on edge. A

couple of years ago, the county bureau established a "relocation" committee, unsuccessfully trying to find a desirable place in Deqin for the county centre to relocate to. Some people suggested moving the county centre to Benzilan, and re-zoning Huaka town in Derong county of Sichuan into Deqin. They drafted a grand blueprint for developing both sides of Jinsha River. The idea of re-zoning some areas of Sichuan to Yunnan was turned down by the Sichuan government as well as the State Council. Hence, the new location for the county centre has never been decided.

### Thirteen Pagodas and Snowy Summits

During the time I spent in Deqin, I was fortunate to partake in the







Kaiguang ceremony (Buddhist ceremony of consecrating a newly completed idol) of the thirteen pagodas in Wunongding (Misty Peak). Misty Peak is adjacent to the Yunnan-Tibetan highway, about 10 km from the county centre. The other side of the archway opens to an area over 100 m long, where 13 pagodas stand in a row, facing the 13 snow-capped peaks of Meili Snow Mountain.

After the Kaiguang ceremony, the custom of "touch-the-head" by the living Buddha begins. In no time all the people line up and devotedly asked the living Buddha to touch their head and pray for them. They all wish for good health and peace. With their heads touched, some people immediately took off the Buddhist necklace of beads from around their necks, asking the living Buddha to bless the beads. Some people offered rice, wheat, buckwheat, barley, and maize — five different grains in a bowl. The living Buddha blew a puff of air at the bowl and recited some mantras, to cast out bad luck and wish for a good harvest for the next year.



1. Lancang River
2. Misty Peak in Deqin stands 13 pagodas in a row, facing the 13 summits of Mt. Meili.
3. Lamas were worshipping at the foot of Mt. Meili during the Kaiguang ceremony of the 13 pagodas.



### Ten days in the Holy Mountain of Meili

Driving from Deqin westward for 10 km we encountered Feilai Monastery. Feilai Monastery is very small, yet has an unusual place in the pilgrims' hearts, because this monastery is a must-stop on the way to Meili Snow Mountain. Mt. Meili is also called Mt. Zhuanshen (Revolving God). Mt. Zhuanshen is further divided into "Large Revolving" and "Small Revolving". The Large Revolving starts in the village of Yangzan, on the side of the Lancang River in Deqin. Pilgrims then hike clockwise around Mt. Meili for one circuit, 280 km in total. It takes about 10 days to finish. Small Revolving begins at the village of Wenquan by the Lancang River in Deqin and ends in Yubengshen Waterfall. It is 28 km long and takes two days to finish. No matter whether you take the Large Revolving or the Small Revolving, you have

first to take the "key" of revolving around the mountain. The so-called "key" is to go and worship in the temple and make a pledge in front of the idols. There are three temples in Mt. Meili where you can get the "keys", and Feilai is one.

In Tibetan region, each holy mountain has its own zodiac. Mt. Meili is of the Year of the Ram. Year 2003 happened to be the Year of the Ram, and it was also a special Guimo year (one of the years in the Chinese calendar which is based on the combination of 10 characters of the decimal cycle, which circulates every 60 years). To the Tibetans, 2003 was a once in a lifetime occasion. Revolving around the mountain requires trekking all the way, and young children and the elderly usually find it hard to finish. But since a pilgrim may only have one chance, Tibetans really cherish it. Coaches arrived from Sichuan,







Mt. Meili is believed to be the guardian god of Jiajuba of the Ningma (Red) Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. It is the top Holy Mountain of the eight found in the Tibetan region. Legend has it that the god of this mountain had nine heads and 18 arms, and he was a wicked and ferocious god. Yet, this god was converted to Buddhism and became a general for the son of the thousand Buddhas. As such, he was chosen to be the prince and was asked to rule the region. Therefore, the place is also called Mt. Taizixue (the snow mountain of the prince). In Tibetan monasteries, one can always find the prince god holding swords and spears on a white horse just next to the Buddha.

In October 1986, the tenth Panchan Lama came to Deqin. In the morning, the Panchan Lama was preaching and holding the "touch-the-head" custom in the county centre plaza. In the afternoon, he went together with the living Buddha to Feilai temple. When Mt. Meili was

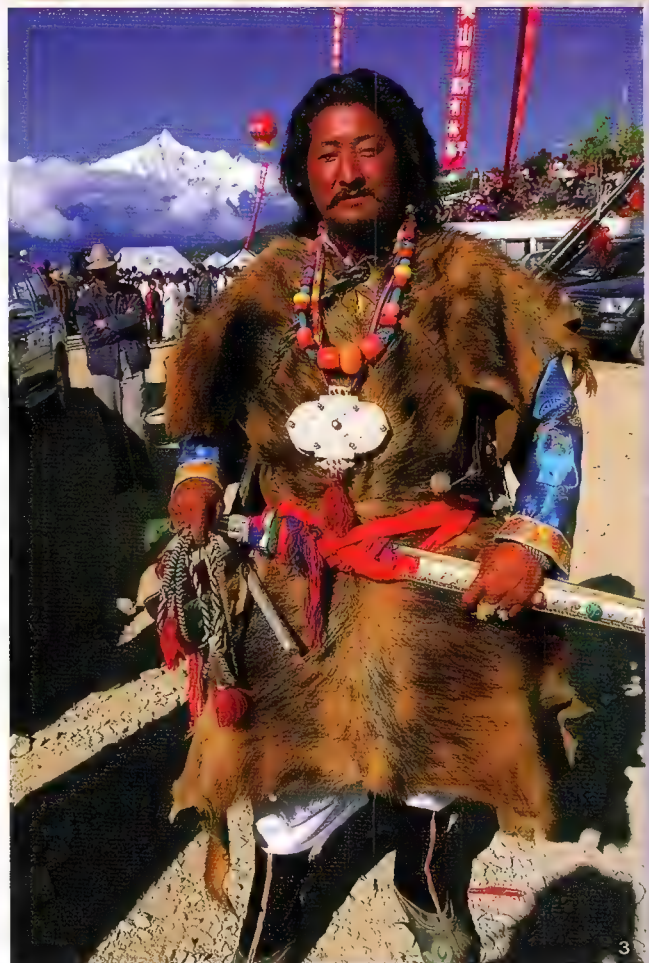


Qinghai, and Gansu. Car bonnets were soldered into different auspicious animal figures such as cows, eagles and snakes. Packed in the cars were Tibetans carrying their pots and pans, bowls and basins.

A 10-minute-walk from Feilai Temple brings you to the outlook pavilion of Mt. Meili, also dubbed the Panchan altar (named after the Panchan Lama of Tibet). Looking out, you can see Mt. Meili linking to Mt. Adongni of Tibet in the north and to Biluo Snow Mountain in the south. About seven or eight Tibetans were burning some branches, and sprinkled on the ground some grains of Qingke (a kind of wheat grown on the high plateau of Tibet) and water. Colourful pennants flapped above, as the Tibetans faced the Holy Mountain, hands clasped, praying and murmuring, asking for blessings.

Tibetans returning from their pilgrimages all had a green bamboo staff and their faces were permeating a sense of peace and serenity. Since the green bamboo is grown on the Holy Mountain, it is regarded as auspicious. After each pilgrimage, Tibetans tie the plants to the strongest pillar in the living room of their homes. The number of bamboos, therefore, tells the number of times the family has taken the pilgrimage.

1. The Yangzan suspension bridge on the Lancang River has eased the lives of the locals.
2. Tibetan Buddhists, having finished their pilgrim in Mt. Meili, came to Yubengshen Waterfall asking for blessings for the new year.
3. Kangba men in festive costumes attracted a lot of attention from visitors. Their costumes cost tens of thousands of yuan and are a symbol of wealth.





## The Sacred Summit Shining on Lancang River



shrouded by thick cloud, the Panchan Lama burnt incense and prayed in front of the overcast mountain. All of a sudden, the clouds covering Mt. Kawagebo dissipated, and showed its snow-white peak. Tens of thousands of Tibetans immediately bowed down and prayed. Afterwards, people began to name the place Panchan Altar.

Mt. Kawagebo is one of the important scenic spots of the three parallel rivers world heritage site. The pyramid shaped snowy summit is accompanied by two glaciers. The two silver dragon-like glaciers run from 5500 m above sea level to the forest region at 2700 m. They are about 800 m from Lancang River. They also become two rare contemporary glaciers that lie in a low latitudinal and oceanic monsoon region.

Returning from the lookout pavilion, I was shocked to find a lot of tripods set on the second floor of the guesthouse behind. The area had become a creative utopia for photographers. The first person to discover the photographic haven was the owner of the guesthouse, Arongma. Arongma was a former teacher in the Feilai Temple Primary school. Retiring in 1998, she opened her first restaurant. Two years later, she used the 120,000 yuan she made to buy an office building in the county centre, and turned it into Pearl Laka Guesthouse. In 2003, she earned

420,000 yuan and then built Mt. Meili Villa. Most customers are photography fanatics. The unpredictable weather of Mt. Meili has become a cash cow for the villa. Visitors from afar will not leave without seeing Mt. Meili, especially if the photographers have not taken a good photo of the mountain. They will wait for tomorrow, and then tomorrow and then another tomorrow. Time flees in hoping and wishing while money pours into the villa.

Next to the villa is a coffee house, called "Migrating Birds". The owners were all young adults. The coffee house was nicely decorated and the bookshelves were filled with magazines and books about Yunnan and Shangri-la. Among them was James Hilton's novel, "The

1. A number of Tibetan, Naxi, and Yi minorities who are Catholic live in the inaccessible river valley of Lancang.
2. Napa Sea in Shangri-la.
3. Cizhong cathedral was built in 1921. It became the central cathedral for the Yunnan deanery.









## The Sacred Summit Shining on Lancang River

Lost Horizon". In the tale, four foreigners were seeking escape from political upheaval. Their military plane crashes high on a Tibetan plateau and they were saved and taken to Shangri-la. There unfolded a mysterious journey. All the places mentioned by Hilton — mountains, glaciers, river valleys, forests, grassland, lakes, Tibetan Buddhist temples, western cathedrals as well as peace and harmony — can all be found here.

### The Cathedral in the Valley

The car snaked around Yunling, Zhalitong, Yanmeng, and went through Lancang Suspension Bridge at Kalimi Village. From a distance, a sublime French style cathedral stood out amid the little houses. I was quite astonished and shocked, not only because there was a western building in the remote Lancang River valley, but also by the fact that Christianity had not overlooked this place lying at the foot of a Buddhist holy mountain.

Upon arriving at Cizhong cathedral, I found the gate locked. The old man guarding the cathedral came all the way from home when he discovered we had come to visit. Grabbing his keys to open the door, he explained, "there are no ministers or anyone working here. Except for Sunday, the door is always locked. Only during Easter and Christmas time will there be priests here." I followed him to the old-fashioned front yard. I looked up and saw that the Gothic pointed roof had been turned into a Chinese-style veranda. Yet taking a close look, I noticed that the building had the meticulous touch of western architecture. All the building materials and colours had been integrated

with Tibetan architectural style, denoting the assimilation of both Chinese and Western cultures.

The Cathedral was built originally in the village of Cigu, about 15 km away in 1905, and rebuilt in 1921. The wear and tear on the walls of Cizhong cathedral told much about the history of this Tibetan region. It recorded the history of the early missionaries sailing here from far away, and their very touching stories burdened with the hardships and dangers of living in the area. Time took away the shadows of those old-time preachers, yet villagers still live in the river valley of Lancang. They use their sweet voices to sing praises, which go all the way to heaven....

### Driving along Mountainous Roads

Leaving Cizhong cathedral, our car drove south, along the path by the side of Lancang River. I rolled down the window to take a look at Mt. Biluoxue. On the other side of Mt. Biluoxue was the river valley of Nu. To go to Mt. Gong, one must continue southward along the Lancang River, pass Weixi, Lanping, and Liuku, turn north, drive up the path alongside Nu River, to reach Fugang, and finally, Mt. Gong. The whole trip would





take about three days. If one takes the path from Yanmen in Deqin, one can get to Bingzhongluo of Mt. Gong in about three days, which is the shortest route. Going there from Yanwa requires the shortest distance, and you can get to Lazan on the Nu River in about one day. The horizontal distance between Yanwa and Lazan is only 20 km — the closest between Lancang River and Nu River. The distance between Yanwa River and Jinsha River is about 60 km, almost the distance between Lancang and Jinsha Rivers. As such, I got off in Yanwa.

1. Dongzhulin Monastery prepared lunch for visitors who came for the Kaiguang ceremony.
2. In the river valley of Lancang, locals use buffalos for farming.
3. Lancang River snakes across Yanmen in Deqin and continues to go west towards Weixi.







## Along the Natural Barrier of

# Nu River



**A**s a posthouse on the ancient Tea Road along the Nu River, Yanwa became a distribution centre for business people travelling between Mt. Gong and Weixi County because of its unique geographical position.

### Crossing Nu River by Ropeway

I walked round Yanwa before entering a restaurant in the evening. The owner is a man of the Naxi ethnic group. I ordered and asked him to help me find a guide. After dinner, he cast a glance at my two backpacks and said, "you can save 100 yuan for renting a horse if you carry one backpack and the guide carries the other." I nodded in agreement. He then leaned toward me and looked into my eyes, "But the guide can not come back the same day, so you'll have to pay for his lodging and return trip expenses." I nodded again.

That evening, the owner brought the guide to me. A man in his 40s, He Yonghua, the guide, looked quite thin. I wanted to ask the restaurant owner to find a younger and stronger man, but embarrassed to say so before the guide. He Yonghua, however, came over to shake hands with me and said, "It's hard to travel in a strange place. I'll take you there and keep you company tomorrow, so that you can have someone to talk to." What he said showed great care and consideration that I gave up the idea of changing the guide. Weighing my bag, he said



that the food we carried would be enough, because the spring water in the mountain tasted better than the mineral water sold in town.

He Yonghua knocked at my window before dawn. I had breakfast with him then we walked over the steel-chain suspension bridge by torchlight. The whole river gorge was shrouded by a thick layer of purple-blue fog. Walking on the swaying bridge in the dim light, I felt like I was drunk.

The sun peeped through the fog as we hiked along a trail up the mountain. An hour later, we arrived at Zhazi Village of Kangpu Township. This little mountain village is inhabited by a few dozen families of the Lisu ethnic group. The houses there are mostly built of





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logs, with wood planking roofs, and look very old. Corn and wheat are planted on the slopes around the houses, and red persimmons were hanging heavily on the trees by the road. As we hiked up, He Yonghua became breathless and was sweating hard, so he had to squat by the spring to drink. He waved at me to go ahead, and walked like this for two hours. I often had to stop and wait for him, and he looked worn out whenever he managed to catch up.

We sat at a house gate high on the mountain. People said we had covered one quarter of the way up the mountain. There would be no more inhabitants as we tracked higher, and we wouldn't see any villages until we climbed over Biluo Snow Mountain and reached Nu River. I was afraid that if we kept walking at this speed, we wouldn't make it to Lazan before evening. If we stayed overnight on the mountain, we had neither camping gear nor adequate food. I bought 10 eggs, boiled them and put them in my backpack. I told He Yonghua that if he was too tired, he could stop. He soon owned up to his lack of

fitness. "To tell you the truth, I haven't climbed this mountain for almost eight years. I didn't know that I could have become so weak. To be honest, we Naxi people are no match for the Lisu people in terms of mountain climbing. I'll help you find a young Lisu man." He got up and went into the house. Before long, he came out with a 23-year-old Lisu man named Apuma, meaning the eldest child in a family. Apuma was rather introverted and seldom spoke. Taking the backpack from He Yonghua he put it into his back basket and walked directly away. The mountain path seemed flat to Apuma, as he often chose the steep straight shortcut instead of taking an easier zigzag path. Before long, I was left far behind. Every time I caught up with him breathlessly, he

1. A six-year-old girl follows her mother to gather firewood in the mountains, carrying her eight-month-old brother.
2. Nu River originating from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau runs from Tibet to Yunnan. It makes its first turn at Bingzhongluo, hence the name "First Bend of the Nu River".



had smoked to his contentment, knocking the stem of his tobacco pipe against stone to get rid of the ash. Then putting the pipe into a pocket, he would stand up and began to climb again, to my dismay. I had to grit my teeth and follow him, because I knew we wouldn't reach Lazan before dark otherwise.



### **Crossing Biluo Snow Mountain**

When we reached Biluo Snow Mountain pass, the sun was down in the west. I was afraid that we wouldn't make it to Lazan before dark, as the path down the mountain was much steeper than the one up the mountain, and my ankle hurt badly. I knew why people say that it is more likely for a horse to stumble while going down a slope. In terms of landscape, the Nu River Gorge is more beautiful than those of the Lancang and Jinsha River Gorges. When I looked down from the mountain into the distant Nu River Gorge, the sun was setting from behind Gaoligong Mountain. The shadow of the mountain turned gray, as the forest seemed to fade out and the clouds in the gorge became vague. I stood there mesmerised by the beautiful sight. Apuma reminded me that it would be dark soon and we needed another two hours to get down the mountain. When we finally reached Lazan, there was but a last drop of light on the horizon. The houses along the road were all lit up, and there were no cars on the road. I entered a shop to get two bottles of soft drink, passing one to Apuma. He asked humbly, "May I change it to a bottle of liquor?" I gestured to him to pick one out for himself. Looking at me in surprise, he quickly took a bottle of white wine and bit off its iron top with his teeth. After a large mouthful of the wine, his face showed the greatest satisfaction. Then he grabbed a handful of chestnuts from his pocket, leaned comfortably against the counter and started to drink slowly, savouring every drop.

When night fell, the temperature dropped, and I got cold as my sweat soaked clothes began to chill



in the night air. I asked the shop owner about finding a hotel. Greatly surprised, he said that there was no hotel and the nearest one was in Puladi, about 10 km away. When I asked if there was any bus, he shook his head, "Hard to say, it's too late." I narrowed my eyes and gazed into the dark road, wondering where I would stay that night. Suddenly I saw a station wagon in the distance. I ran over as fast as I could, and asked the driver if he could take me to Puladi Township.

The car drove swiftly along the asphalt road by the Nu River and we arrived 10 minutes later, where I went straight to the hotel.

### Myanmar beyond the Mountain

When I woke up the next morning, I saw the Nu River surging below, and the well-forested Gaoligong Mountain like a green protective screen. Behind the mountain lies Myanmar's Kachin State, which is the second largest state in Myanmar. It has a small population but rich reserves of mineral resources and forest, especially famous for its teak and jade. I learned from chatting with the hotel owner that there are many tracks leading to Myanmar from the Gaoligong Mountain, where deals in red (ruby), green (jade), white (heroin) and black (opium) business are conducted.

From the hotel gate I caught a van heading for Gongshan Town. Along the way I saw many paths leading to Myanmar which the locals use as trade routes. Of course I could see neither smuggling nor drug trafficking, just timber coming in endlessly from Myanmar, laid one layer above another packed tightly in piles by the Nu River.

### Gorge Forest Seriously Damaged by Logging

I learned that as China's economy had developed rapidly in the past decade, the amount of timber consumption

had increased tremendously. Most people like to have teakwood furniture, floors and ships, because it is hard, corrosion-resistant, and light. The timber is produced mostly in India, Indonesia and Myanmar. Although it also grows in China's Guangdong and Yunnan Provinces, there is not much teakwood left because of logging, and the State Council has forbidden teak logging. Most of China's imported timber comes from Myanmar. The country has rich forest resources, is economically undeveloped and also close to China. Myanmar timber merchants have become rich by contracting complete mountains one after another.

### A Myriad of Orchid Varieties

The Nu River Gorge is located in the far western reaches of the Three Parallel Rivers. Gaoligong Mountain and Biluo Snow Mountain are over 3,000 m above the river surface, which falls two metres per kilometre on average. The area has a very rich variety of fauna and flora species. It is regarded as a "species gene bank" by botanists. Among some 3,000 higher plants in the Nu River Gorge — the major orchid producing area in Yunnan Province — there are over 250 kinds of flowers, including 150 types of orchids with some 30 especially rare species.

### Crossing the Nu River

The surging water of the Nu River runs swiftly down the deep gorge, which shoots up steeply on both banks. Between the lofty cliffs above the torrents, ropeways are the only way across. In the past, most of the ropeways were made of vines, and a grooved sliding board was clasped onto the rope. The board had to bear a lot of abrasion, and the rope would age and become brittle easily. As ropes often broke, drowning the unfortunate person trying to cross, the rope must be changed every three to six months.

Today, most of the ropeways have been replaced by steel cables, and the wooden sliding board by steel pulleys. I met a few young Lisu people carrying loads who were preparing to cross the river. The bamboo baskets on their backs were packed with fertiliser. They used a steel pulley to clasp to the steel cable, cowhide rope to fasten to their legs, their hands holding the steel



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1. As the water of the Nu River recedes in the winter, local people on both banks row their bamboo rafts to collect timber washed down from the upper reaches of the river for firewood.
2. A billiards room at Yunling Township by the Lancang River. This game is quite popular in China's bordering mountain areas.
3. Stomps featuring Orchids (by Liu Jiatao)
4. Pleione bulbocodioides (Franch.) Rolfe growing at the height of 1,750-2,250 m above sea level. (by Liu Jiatao)





pulley tight. A hard kick against the rock and they whizzed swiftly to the other side of the river.

### **The First Bend of Nu River**

At Gongshan County Town I changed to a mini-bus which headed for Bingzhongluo 44 km away. In 90 minutes I arrived at Bingzhongluo scenic area. The Nu River comes from Tibet. After entering Shimenguan, it makes several turns in a short distance of several kilometres from Bingzhongluo to Lada. Standing by the river and looking into the distance, I felt that the most beautiful villages are built on mountainsides. A quick glance might make you think that they are an integral part of the mountains, but a closer look reveals their different architectural styles. Some houses have balustrades that were put together like matchsticks, some are piled up with logs, some are built of firmly tamped dirt. Despite their different styles, they all have slate roofs. These flat and thin slates all come from shale found in mountains nearby. Shale is rather soft in nature, so it is easier to cut and nail, and local stonemasons find it a valuable building material.

Bingzhongluo is the largest open terrain north of the Nu River Gorge. It is inhabited by Nu, Lisu, Tibetan and Dulong ethnic minorities. There are Tibetan monasteries as well as Catholic and other Christian churches. For a long time, people of different ethnic groups and three religious backgrounds have lived in peace. Today, the traditional virtue exists. The local saying, "No one pockets anything lost on the road" is still valid, so people can leave their door open at night and not worry about break-in. I visited some houses as I walked around. Some of the families were drying corn, while others were grinding wheat into flour with hand tools. Local residents can all speak more than three ethnic languages.

In the evaluation report of the IUCN — The World Conservation Union — when nominating the Three Parallel Rivers for inclusion in UNESCO's world heritage list, it is written: "The ethnic minorities here have shown in many aspects the connections between their rich cultures and the land — their religious beliefs, mythology and art."

### **Caravans out of Work**

Northern Bingzhongluo borders Zayul County, which is known as "Tibetan Jiangnan" (south of the Yangtze River or land of abundance). The highway from Tibet ends at Zayul County Town, and from here to to Tsawarong Township further south there are four large snow



covered mountains, making transportation extremely inconvenient. I went to Tsawarong Township last November. Local cadres told me that five years ago, the Zayul County governor came here after a seven-day journey. He had never come again since then. Two years ago, it took four days for cadres from the hinterland to come to Tsawarong via



Bingzhongluo to help with construction work in Tibet. Actually, there is an ancient tea and horse road from Bingzhongluo to Tsawarong Township where the Tibetans get all their daily necessities from Bingzhongluo.

Today, trains of horses laden with merchandise can still be seen at Bingzhongluo, travelling along the Nu River Gorge between Yunnan and

Tibet. It takes four days for them to reach Tsawarong Township from Bingzhongluo. Each horse can carry a 60-kg load. In addition to fodder, a horse will need two kilograms of corn every day. So a two-yuan bottle of Dali beer will sell for eight yuan at Tsawarong. But this situation will soon change. An 82-km sandstone road from Tsawarong to Bingzhongluo is being built by Tibet and Yunnan Province governments. After the road is

open to traffic, it will take only three hours' drive to cover the distance.

Suddenly, I felt a fit of melancholy. When the road is open to traffic, the caravan people will be out of work. While I am glad about the new highway that will soon be opened, I am also worried about the caravan teams that will face unemployment before long.

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1. Bingzhongluo of the Nu River Gorge is one possible site of the legendary Shangri-la.
2. Tibetan women living in Bingzhongluo shell the corn seeds and use the left over corn to make wine.
3. The Nu River originates from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.
4. The ropeway is one of the bridges connecting the two sides of the Nu River.



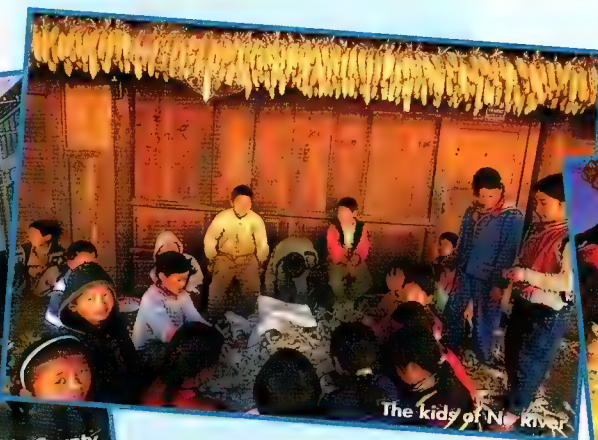
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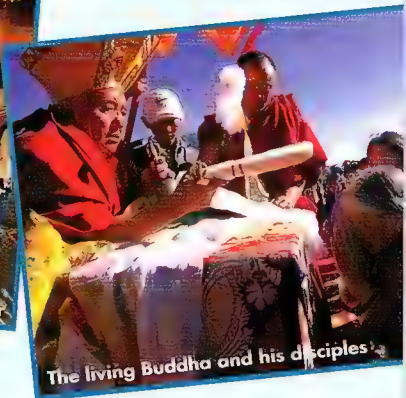
## Tips for Touring the Three Parallel Rivers



Shangri-la County



The kids of Nu River



The living Buddha and his disciples

The core region of the Three Parallel Rivers on the World Heritage List of natural properties is 17,000 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of Gaoligong Mountain, Minling Mountain, Haba Snow Mountain, Qianhu Mountain, Hongshan Mountain, Yunling Mountain, Laojun Mountain, and Laowo Mountain areas.

It is impossible to see at the same time the geographical wonders of the Three Parallel Rivers, which are the Jinsha River, Lancang River and Nu River from east to west. Someone once tried to take their pictures from an airplane but failed, only to photograph them one by one.

### Suggested Tour of the Three Parallel Rivers

Starting from Kunming, pass Dali, Lijiang, Shigu (Jinsha River), Hutiaoxia (Tiger Leaping Gorge), Baishuitai, Zhongdian, Benzilan, Lancang River, and Cizhong Catholic Church, climb the Biluo Snow Mountain at Yanwa Village in Baijixun Township, Weixi County, to reach Lazan Village at Puladi Township in Gongshan County (Nu River); then follow the Nu River northward to Bingzhongluo in Gongshan County to return to Kunming via Fugong, Liuku and Lanping.

#### Transport:

**Kunming to Dali** — bus, train and airplane are all available. Shuttle bus to Dali every hour is the most convenient. The train is comfortable and safe, but you need to book the ticket (K742 leaves Kunming at 9:17) early. Airplane is the fastest as well as the most expensive.

**Ancient Dali Town** — one or two days' tour.

**Dali to Lijiang** — many buses are available, driving for about half a day. Lijiang may take one or two days to tour.

**Lijiang to Shigu** — the first bend of the Yangtze River, to Hutiaoxia (Tiger Leaping Gorge), to Baishuitai (White Water Terrace), and to Zhongdian — there are many tourist attractions along the way. It is better to rent a car for two days, and stay overnight at Baishuitai. Zhongdian is also called Shangri-la, where there are many scenic

spots which may take two days to see.

**Shangri-la to Benzilan** — Benzilan has no other tourist attractions except Yueliangwan (Moon Bay) by the Jinsha River and Dondrup Temple, they are not accessible to buses, so you need to rent a car to go there.

**Degen to Puladi Township** — If you want to see the scenery of "Sunshine over the Golden Mountain" at Minling Mountain, it's better to stay overnight in the hotel at Feilai Temple (taxi to Feilai Temple costs 30 yuan\*, but it's impossible to find one early in the morning in the county town). In both morning and evening with the best light possible, you can sit at the Migrator Birds Cafe, with a cup of strong fragrant coffee in hand, to appreciate the wonderful scenery of Minling Mountain. If you want to really go to the mountain, you can take a bus to Mingyong Glacier (entrance ticket 60 yuan/person). The landscape is stunning along the Lancang River Gorge from Dechen to Weixi. There is only one bus a day, which often stops running. So it is necessary to rent a car. Cross-country vehicle costs 500 yuan a day, one way only. On the way you can see the Cizhong Church and ethnic minority chieftain's office. Hiking for a day from Yanwa to cross the Biluo Snow Mountain, you can reach Lazan in Gongshan County by the Nu River. It would be better to find a local Lisu ethnic guide and let him carry some of your load. A guide a day needs 60 yuan including tips. As it is usually rather late when arriving at Lazan, the guild's accommodation fee of 20 yuan and the return trip fee of 30 yuan must be paid. There is no hotel at Lazan, but you can rent a farmer's car or van to go to Puladi Township, which costs 30 yuan. A rented car to Gongshan County Town is 80 yuan.

**Lazan to Bingzhongluo** — You need to change buses at Gongshan County Town. Recently a highway has been built from Gongshan to Derung River, but it sometimes closes, making it inconvenient for travellers. The highway from Gongshan County to Tsawarong Township, Zayul County in Tibet will be open to traffic this year, by then it will be much more convenient to go to Tibet.

#### Flights:

Kunming to Dali, Lijiang, Shangri-la, available everyday.

#### Buses:

Kunming Passenger Transport Bus Station has buses for

Dali, Lijiang and Shangri-la every hour. Buses there are not as new and luxury as those at the Provincial High-grade Highway Express Passenger Transport Station, but bus fare is a little cheaper.

#### Accommodation

##### Dali:

**Four Seasons Hotel:** Standard room 125 yuan/room (with breakfast). Ordinary double-bedded room 50 yuan/room. Three-bedded room 60 yuan/room. Address: Bo'ai Lu, Gucheng, Dali. Tel: 0872-2670382. MCA standard room 120 yuan/room. Double-bedded room 50 yuan/room. Big room with many beds 10 yuan/person. Address: Nanmen, Gucheng, Dali. Tel: 0872-2673666

**Admission:** Butterfly Spring 20 yuan. Three Pagodas of Chongsheng Temple 20 yuan. Yan-family Courtyard of Bai ethnic group at Xizhou 5 yuan. Dong-family Courtyard 4 yuan.

##### Lijiang:

**Youth Hostel of Lijiang:** Double-bedded room 120 yuan/room. Single bedded room 100 yuan/room. Big room with many beds 15 yuan/bed (membership price: 5-10 yuan deduction). Facilities: laundromat, fast-food restaurant, Internet room. Address: 44 Mishi Xiang, Xinyi Jie, Gucheng, Lijiang. Tel: 0888-5105403.

##### Shangri-la Hostel:

Ordinary double-bedded room 80 yuan. Facilities: public bathroom and toilet, TV set in every room, located in downtown area. Address: 10 Jishan Xiang, Xinyi Jie, Gucheng, Lijiang. Tel: 0888-5180435

**Admission:** Mufu Courtyard 10 yuan. Ancient Naxi Music Concert 40 yuan (free to guests living in the guesthouse of the



Nu River





concert hall). Heilongtan (Black Dragon Pool) and Lijiang County Museum 20 yuan.

**The First Bend of the Yangtze River at Shigu Town:**

Shigu Town is 51 km from Lijiang. There are several buses everyday leaving from Lijiang Passenger Transport Terminal to Shigu Town, which can be reached over an hour. Tourists can return to Lijiang the same day.

**Hutiaoxia (Tiger Leaping Gorge):**

Tiger Leaping Gorge is about 90 km from Lijiang. Shuttle buses are available either to Hutiaoxia or Zhongdian. Get off the bus at bridgehead. Bus fare 20 yuan. Entrance ticket 30 yuan. Sedan chair round trip to and from the Tiger Leaping Stone 60 yuan.

Accommodation: There are various kinds of small hostels for hikers and backpackers, quite clean, hot water available almost 24 hours. Standard bed 15 yuan/person.

**Beishuitai (White Water Terrace):**

Entrance ticket 30 yuan. About 100 km from Shangri-la, bus ticket 20 yuan. Rented car 200 yuan.

Accommodation: Over 30 hostels of various kinds. Standard room 160 yuan/room. Double-bedded room: 60 yuan.

**Benzilan:**

Scenic spots: To go to Dondrup Temple from Benzilan, you can take the bus from Kunming to Zhongdian (some drivers may not like to take such short-distant travellers), get off at Nanyongganding of Shusong

Village. Renting a car at Benzilan to Dondrup Temple costs 40 yuan; you can stop midway at Yueliangwan (Moon Bay) to appreciate the Lancang River's big bend. Accommodation: Over 20 hostels of various kinds. Standard room 60 yuan. Standard bed 15 yuan. A taste of the fish in the Lancang River is a must, costing about 55 yuan for half a kilogram.

**Shangri-la:**

**Tashi-Delek Hotel (four-star):** Standard room 360 yuan. Tibetan song and dance performance available every



night. Location: In Shangri-la County Town. Tel: 0887-8222788

**Shangri-La County Travellers Club:** Standard room 40 yuan. Similar to youth hostel, with quiet and comfortable environment, a bar, and bicycle rental service. Address: 98 Heping Lu, Shangri-la County. Tel: 0887-8228845

Scenic spot: Songzanlin Temple entrance ticket 10 yuan. Taking bus No. 3 at Changzheng Lu in county town to Sumtsen Temple costs one yuan. Taxi 10 yuan.

Napahai Lake entrance ticket 10 yuan. Taking a van at county town to the lake costs 3 to 5 yuan.

Bitu Lake entrance ticket 30 yuan. 20 yuan for bus leaving from the passenger transport station at county town to Shuangqiao. After getting off the bus there is still seven more kilometres to cover either by hiking or horse riding. 80 yuan for renting a horse for round trip.

**Deqen:**

**Guesthouse of Deqen County People's Government:** Standard room 160 yuan. Address: Zhongduan, Nanping Jie, Deqen County Town. Tel: 0887-8412118

**Taizifeng Grand Hotel of Deqen County:** Standard room 260 yuan. Address: Wenhua Lu, Deqen County. Tel: 0887-8413188

Minling Mountain Villa: Standard room 160 yuan. Address: Feilai Temple.

Scenic spots:

Kawagebo Peak — the highest peak of Minling Mountain, also the first of the eight sacred mountains for Tibetans. Feilai Temple is the best location to appreciate Minling Mountain.

Mingyong Glacier — a rare low latitude glacier in the world. Entrance ticket 60 yuan. Regular bus to Mingyong from Deqen County Town 15 yuan, available every day. 300 yuan for a rented car's round trip.

**Cizhong Church:**

**Accommodation:** Simple hostel at Cizhong Village costs 10 yuan. Located at Cizhong Village in Yanmen Township in Deqen County, the church is not directly accessible by bus. You can take the bus from Deqen to Yanmen Township, or the bus from Deqen to Weixi, get off at Kalami Village when passing Yanmen Township, then

walk to the church.

**Weixi:**

Guesthouse of Weixi County People's Government: Standard room 120 yuan. Address: Weixi County Town. Tel: 0887-8626677

**Gongshan:**

**Scenic spots:** Bingzhongluo is one of the possible places for the legendary Shangri-la. The scenery regions along the way are all open and no tickets are required. The First Bend of the Nu River is a tourist attraction on the way to Bingzhongluo. Looking from the highway across the river, you can see the torrential Nu River has become especially calm here, forming a smooth U turn. With the village across the river in sight, it presents a charming landscape of fields and gardens.

Accommodation: Bingzhongluo Grandma Ding's House typical of Nu Ethnic Group Lifestyle.

Double-bedded room 20 yuan

Tel: 0886-3581144

**Fugong:**

Stone Moon, Lidisha Stone Group and Pine Tree at the Middle of the River are scenic spots on the way from Fugong to Gongshan County. All the sceneries are found along the Nu River and admission free.

Fugong County Guesthouse of Post and Telecommunications: Standard room 120 yuan/room. Location: Fugong County Town next to the Fugong County Passenger Transport Station. Tel: 0886-3411851. Transport: Shuttle bus between Gongshan and Fugong available every half an hour, taking about 3 hours.

**Liuku:**

**Nuijiang Baiyi Grand Hotel (3-star):** Standard room 180 yuan/room. Address: Beside the Liuku Long Distance Transport Station. Tel: 0886-3627988

**Nuijiangzhou Hotel:** Standard room 100 yuan/room. Address: Renmin Beilu, Liuku. Tel: 0886-3626888

Transport: Shuttle bus from Liuku every half an hour, reaching Fugong in about 3 hours. Liuku is some 200 km from Dali. A bus leaves Liuku Passenger Transport Station every half an hour, reaching Dali in about 5 hours. The 600-km distance from Liuku to Kunming takes about 12 hours' drive. There are several buses from Liuku Passenger Transport Station to Kunming every day.





# A Birthplace of Raging Sandstorms — *Ejin River*

Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong



Originating from the Qilianshan Mountains, the Heihe River passes Jiuquan, Gansu Province, where it is known as the Ruoshui River, and then flows to Inner Mongolia in the north, where people call it the Ejin River.

Ejin River used to pass through the harsh Gobi Desert and irrigated the farmland there; however, it has gone from being a source of life to a generator of sandstorms that plague Beijing and the northern Chinese areas. Worsening soil erosion and severe damage to the ecological environment have dried out the river, and now, it is struggling to survive.

**T**he Heihe River has always had a water flow problem, and its another name Ruoshui (which means weak in Chinese) reflects this. The river is 800 km in length with a drainage area of 38,000

km<sup>2</sup>. It flows through the Ejin Banner from south to the north, watering one of the three largest diversiform-leaved poplar forests (23,000 ha) in the world.

A fan-shaped delta formed at the end

of the Heihe River, known as Juyanhai Lake, was once a beautiful place. It is a pity that people can no longer see the beautiful scenery now because of the drought and dried-up water source. An ecological



scourge imperils the Ejin River and from the 1980s the river ran dry, resulting in the disappearance of the lakes. And even the diversiform-leaved poplars, renowned for its ability to survive in an arid climate, are decreasing by more than 100,000 each year due to the great reduction in underground water.

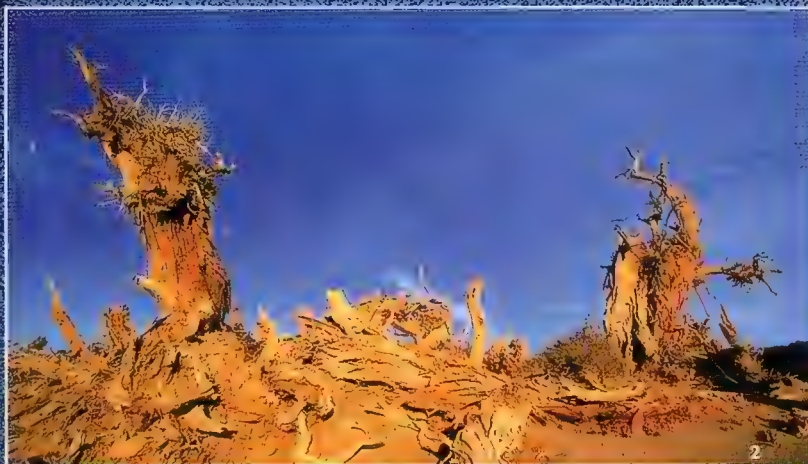
### Water Diverted from the Upper Reaches of the Heihe River

To celebrate the annual Autumn Poplar Festival, water from the upper reaches of the Heihe River is diverted for several days to Dalai Hubu Town, seat of the banner government. Unfortunately, such practice cannot quench the thirst of the dried out

riverbed for long.

When we passed a concave stone bridge, 14 km from Ejin Banner, the extra supply of water flooded the bridge temporary. Several days later, the level dropped and I could see the bridge again; however, before I left Ejin, the river had dried up again.

There is a 130-ha dense poplar forest



1. Wearing masks because of the dust storm
2. Dead diversiform-leaved poplar
3. The former West Juyanhai Lake is now the birthplace of sandstorms.





near the bridge. I saw a young man, named Zhu Haijun, herding sheep on his motorcycle. The forest belongs to his family who have lived there for more than 20 years.

He said the environment was very good before. The land was used to be covered with green grass and water flowed all the year round, except July and August. But eight years ago the river often ran dry and grass

began to wither due to the lack of water.

### **Nineteen Rivers, Four Left**

Ejin is at the west end of Inner Mongolia with a dry climate and an average precipitation of 40 mm, but it has an evaporation rate of more than 4,000 mm a year. It is lucky to have the Heihe River stocking many lakes and creating a 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> oasis. About 23,000 ha of poplar forest grow on the two sides of the river.

Originating from Qinghai Province, the Heihe River passes Gansu Province and flows into Ejin Banner, Inner Mongolia, and then it forks east and west through the Langxin Mountains. The East River has eight branches and the West River 11 branches. But today, only four of the 19, such as Longxi River and Hatetai River, have water once in a while.

So where does the water go?

Information from the Department of





Water Resources shows that there are 58 medium and small reservoirs, such as Jinta, Mayinghe and Zhangye reservoirs, with a total water storage capacity of 255 m<sup>3</sup> and 35 sluices on the middle and upper reaches of the Heihe River. This means the water will be stopped 35 times and much of the flow is used for irrigation. No wonder the lower reaches of the river ran dry.

tourism board has put it on a list of tourist attractions to let people see the pitiful sight. As long as there is a little wind, a wild sandstorm dance is sure to be performed.

It was hard to believe that the vast dust storm area that we drove through used to be a lake.

When I got out of the car, I could see that one side was the dark sandstorm and

the other, the blue sky. I took out my camera to take a frenzy of pictures by taking advantage of an interval in the sandstorm. I saw that the sandstorm danced madly on the former lakebed and then circled upwards, getting stronger and stronger just like a dragon dashing at us. I couldn't get back into the car so I had to turn my body against the storm to hide my camera with my coat. I could not stand up straight and my ears felt as if they were being pricked by needles. It seemed that doomsday had come.



1. The Heihe River diverted water to its lower reaches in October, reviving the long-drying river.
2. The dried up river course of the trunk stream of the Heihe River
3. The dried Gobi Desert has water once in a while.
4. Herding sheep in the forest on motorcycle

The Heihe River has been the lifeline of Ejina oasis since ancient times, and its state has a direct affect on the area. A change of the river course once caused a migration of the oasis, and the drying out of the river today is even more harmful.

### A Dust Bowl Now

I decided to go see the lakes but the driver told me that there was nothing worth seeing.

West Juyanhai Lake (also known as Gashun Nuor in Mongolian, meaning Bitter Water Lake) is about 30 km north of Dalai Hube. This lake, once the most beautiful place in Ejina, has been dried up for about 40 years.

Since the West Juyanhai Lake has now become a birthplace of sandstorms, the





The sandstorms that battered Beijing and other places in north China in 2000 were mainly originated from the Alxa League.

### **Metre-long Dead Fishes**

The next day we went to see East Juyanhai Lake, finding the desolate site after

bumping two hours on the 70-km dirt road.

East Juyanhai Lake is also known as Suge Nuor in Mongolian (meaning lake of otters) because local residents found otters in the lake 250 years ago. Since its elevation is the lowest in the Ejin area, it has become the destination of the Ejin River. In the 1960s the lake dried up, then water came back briefly, but in 1986 it dried up again.

I looked at the different surfaces of the lake closely and found that sand locks had been formed after the clay layer of the lakebed was torn up by wind,

lined up in regular patterns. When strong winds blow, the sand dances in the gale.

Desertification happens mainly in the dried up surfaces of lakes and rivers, especially in the vast open area.

Since the East Juyanhai Lake has a vast area and there is no vegetation at all, desertification easily sets in. If water is not diverted in time, this lake will become another sandstorm breeding ground.

At the foot of the Aobao Mountains there is an artesian well, the only one in the lake area. Clear water flows out slowly into a wooden trough, and there is a puddle of water in the saline-alkali dirt. Camels and horses passing this place will take a break to enjoy the water.

### **Long-standing Swan Lake Vanished**

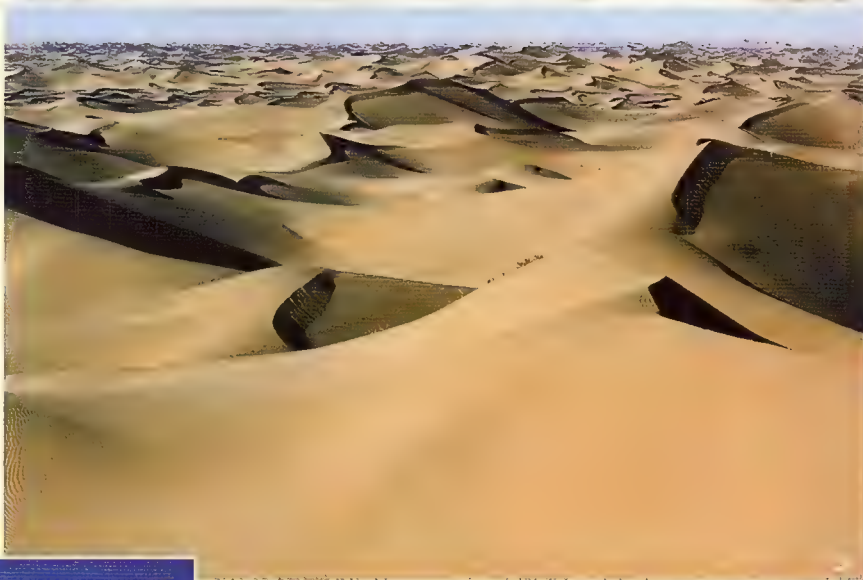
Passing Badaoqiao, people can see a





deserted highway that is blocked by sand. While walking forward, I saw a sand dune right in the middle of the road and climbed up to a disappointing scene. All the wire poles were covered with sand up to their tops. I could easily walk across the wires on top of the dune.

We reached the desert area of Badaoqiao, on the edge of Badan Jilin in the north. While continuing forward, more and more sand dunes emerged. After climbing up a higher mound, a magnificent scene appeared before my eyes as dunes joined together looking like rolling waves, a typical



**Postscript:** It has been two years since my last visit to Ejina, and I always keep thinking about the beautiful but desolate place. Two years ago, Li Jing told me that the East Juyanhai Lake, which had been dry for 10 years, had water. The largest water area was 24 km<sup>2</sup> and the deepest water 0.6 m, with a total of 10,000 million m<sup>3</sup> of water stored. But unfortunately, it dried up again in May 2003 owing to the quick evaporation and leakage.

Not long ago Li Jing told me that Heihe River had once again been diverted, with 720 million m<sup>3</sup> going to its lower reaches in the second half of 2003, irrigating about 40,000 ha of land. The government has issued a regulation that aims to seal the water of the river for central diversion. Hopefully the natural beauty of the lakes in the Ejina area, such as Swan Lake and Badaoqiao, will live on. It seems that I am ready for another trip to Ejina.

desert scene.

It took about 20 minutes to get from the Swan Lake from Badaoqiao. Getting out of the car, I looked around and saw only desert, no lake at all, let alone swans. The once beautiful swan lake has now become a place with only broken stones, sand and steam under the sun; the lake was dried out once and for all in 1992.



*Translated by Wang Zengfen*

1. Wire poles erected several years ago have been buried by sand.
2. The riverbed ran dry.
3. Badan Jilin Desert
4. Several years ago the local government encouraged local people to continue farming, but the policy has been adjusted due to the decrease of underground water.

**Transportation:** Taking an airplane from Guangzhou to Yinchuan, and a bus to Bayan Haote, government seat of Alxa League, then the early morning regular bus to Ejina. Public transport is not so convenient in Ejina, so it is better to rent a car to drive to the various scenic spots.

**Hotels:** 136 yuan\*/room in Ejina Hotel; 120 yuan/room in Youdian Hotel; and 20 yuan in some inns and hostels. The first half of October is the busy tourist time so sometimes tourists will not find hotels during that period. If you want to rent a car or join the local tourist group please contact Ejina Travel Centre.

Person in charge: Na Sen  
Telephone: 13948015650

\* US \$1 = 8 yuan

## Travel Tips







# Uygur *Bazaar* in China's Wild Wild West

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Chen Xu



1. There are Uyghur song and dance performances at the International Bazaar.
2. The tower buildings on the new International Bazaar square are of Islamic architectural style.
3. The newly built shopping mall is another form of bazaar.

A trip to Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, would not be complete without visiting Erdaoqiao. With high rises everywhere, Urumqi is just like any other metropolis. Only by roaming the big bazaar (marketplace) and savouring local delicacies at Erdaoqiao, can one get a real taste of Uyghur culture and feel the wild west.







**E**rdaoqiao is inhabited by ethnic minority people, the Uygurs in particular. In the past, it was crowded with chaotic stalls and stands. Now, there is the new International Bazaar and the new Pingmin Street. This bazaar is built in the Islamic architectural style, and covers an area of 80,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

### The Biggest **Supermarket** in the World

The International Bazaar has an 80-m sightseeing tower, 3,000 handicraft shops, a banquet hall that can accommodate 1,000 diners and a massive square. This place once hosted 10 million visitors in 2002!

Bazaar in Uygur language means a marketplace or country fair. They are scattered everywhere in Xinjiang; in fact, bartering marketplaces existed in Xinjiang along the Silk Road some 2,000 years ago. The Uygur people are Muslim, and are nurtured in the Arabic culture. They are often called "born businesspeople", and have been trading with the outside world for generations, absorbing foreign culture during the process.

The bazaars provided a platform for exchange and opened a door to the world for the Uygurs. Nowadays, the ancient bazaar is flushed with new life. Visitors are able to enjoy local delicacies and experience the life of western China here.

### Mouthwatering **Fruit**

I visited the new International Bazaar late last summer. There was such a variety of goods that I could not take it all in. My mouth watering, I started the tour of the bazaar at the food stands.

Xinjiang is known for its production of fruit and melons. Various types of fruit ripen late in summer, and I saw a good harvest. Sweet Hami melons, watermelons, grapes, thin-skinned and juicy Kuerle pears and Hotan pomegranates were shining lustrously under the bright lamps.

Pomegranate is called "Anaer" in Uygur language, and the largest kind can weigh up to one kilogram. The skin of ripe



1. Fragrant roast lamb
2. Local and imported fruit is available along the small street outside the bazaar
3. Baked mutton-filled bun
4. The night fair gathers delicacies of various ethnic groups.
5. Horse blood sausage at the Uygur food market

6. Xinjiang restaurant outside the International Bazaar
7. Mutton shish kebab
8. The large nang originated from southern Xinjiang is available everywhere around the bazaar.
9. Xinjiang is rich in various nuts and dried fruits.





pomegranate often cracks to expose the neatly arranged crystal-clear seeds. The juicy pulp taste both tart and sweet. I learned from a friend that pomegranate flowers are a favourite ornament of Uygur girls. A lot of Uygur women have the name "Anaer Guli", meaning pomegranate flower.

Among the vendors are old men with white beards, veiled women and lively young men. Their business motto is: do business with a smile, and you will make a pile of money. Customers are free to sample different types of fruit from one stand to another.

Various fruit types are available, such as thin-skinned walnuts, dried apricots, raisins, candied fruit, Chinese wolfberries and wild jujubes. The most memorable is Badanmu, a nut produced in southern

Xinjiang, looking something like an almond and said to be good for heart disease. The skin of quality Badanmu is as thin as paper. The Uygur people often have pictures of the nut embroidered on their hats or painted on their furniture. They even make it into a milky white delicious drink.

### Local Snacks

In addition to fruit, barbecue food rich in ethnic flavour is also outstanding at the bazaar. I was first attracted to baked nang, a kind of crusty pancake. As the staple food of Uygur people, there are a dozen types of nang, varying in diameter from 10 - 50 cm. They are baked in a cylindrical stove and can be kept for six to 10 months. During my journey across the desert with a camel team, I saw how the solid pancake soften after being put in the scorching hot sand just for a while, giving out a delicious aroma. It was this nang that took the ancient Silk Road to the West and gave birth to today's pizza.

Mutton shish kebab is also a Uygur favourite. While skillfully turning the kebabs over the stove, the peddlers often cry out to attract passers-by. The mutton is sizzling over the charcoal fire, the fragrance reaching far into the distance. In addition to mutton, there are baked stuffed buns, eggs and baked sweet potatoes. The last and best item on the menu is roast lamb. It is better to eat in a group, and eat to your heart's content without paying attention to table manners.

### Collectible Knives

Over the years I have been to Xinjiang many times, and each time I buy several Yingjiasha knives as gifts for my friends.

The most famous Xinjiang knife is produced in Yingjiasha, hence the name. In order to get a genuine





Yingjisha knife, I visited the small county seat of Yingjisha in southern Xinjiang. I learned from local people that the knife has a history of over 400 years. It features exquisite workmanship, beautiful shapes, a flat shiny body and sharp blade. Handles are made of either silver or copper, or bone inlaid with artificial pearls, metal threads, colourful patterns, and even jade. A fine leather sheath is fitted to make it easy to carry. The inner sheath is made of wood, flat and thin, while the outside is covered with leather. Usually they are bright red, but some are black or brown.

The genuine Yingjisha knife is made of special stainless steel. The stainless steel is first modelled into crude bases and then polished by file before being quenched. The knives after quenching treatment by skilled craftsmen usually boast a very sharp blade. The artisans also mark the knife blade with patterns, including crescents, calabash, pomegranate flowers and Badanmu flowers, or with their own names.

Because of the Yingjisha knife's high reputation, all knives in Urumqi, whether they are actually produced in Yingjisha or not, bear the name Yingjisha either in Uygur or Chinese. Such infringements have created much confusion. Experience has shown me that hand made knives equipped with machine sewn leather sheath are more likely to be from Yingjisha, while the fancy knives with glass handles or produced through chromium-plating technology are fake.

### Pakistani Handicrafts

At the bazaar I felt strongly that tradition of the ancient Silk Road has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Europeans, Arabians, Russians and Indians do business here through gestures and different languages, bringing goods as well as their cultures. Among the goods are copper and stone sculptures, hand-made carpets and tapestry, as well as ethnic costumes and ornaments from Pakistan.

There are a good number of booths dealing in Pakistani goods of excellent quality and reasonable price. The most popular goods are engraved cast brass objects and handicrafts. I learned from salespeople here that Russian copperplate engraving had gradually been replaced by Pakistani copper sculptures.

The history of copper sculpture in Pakistan can be traced back several hundred years. Technology from Turkey and Iran was first introduced in northern India and then passed to Pakistan. The vessels, kettles, and plates were initially luxurious articles for daily use by Pakistani aristocrats. Later they gradually became elegant decorations. Most artisans inherit the technology from their fathers and then hand it down to their sons. Children begin to learn the skill about the age of five to six. After they master the skills at the age of 15, they devote their whole life to their trade. Prices of engraved copper articles at the bazaar range from 10 to some 10,000 yuan apiece. They are made by Pakistani men, while clothing, tapestry and carpets are made mainly by women.

The masterpieces of ethnic minority women in Xinjiang compare



1. Copper plates chiselled and carved with delicate touches are imported from Arabic countries.
2. Musical instruments of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang.
3. On-the-spot demonstration of Hotan carpet weaving
4. Silver jewelry cases in various styles
5. Brightly coloured Yingjisha knives
6. Beautiful Uygur hats
7. Copper wares with the precision of Kashi sculptors.







favourably with Pakistani carpets at the bazaar. The embroidery works and carpets from Hotan, Shache and Kashi retain the bright colour of ancient Xinjiang fabric. The dyestuff is extracted from animals, tree roots, nut shells, grapes and other plants, and it contains no chemical elements. The most valuable is the Anaer Guli (pomegranate flower) carpet.

What's more, Pakistani wood engraving is also very attractive. Such handiworks use the rosewood native to Pakistan as raw material. They boast exquisite workmanship and great variety. The representative product is the wooden pergola ornamented with the pattern of a camel head while the bottom is engraved with camel feet.

## Hotan Jade

One thing which can't be overlooked at the bazaar is Hotan jade. It has a history of at least 7,000 years in China. In ancient books Kunlun Mountain was called the "mountain of jade stones" or "forefather of mountains". In the Shang Dynasty (c.1600 B.C. - c.1100 B.C.), Hotan jade was introduced to Anyang, capital of Shang, from Xinjiang. The nobles at that time considered it an honour to use Hotan jade. They wore it all the time, and they would even have the jade buried with them. It is amazing how so many jade stones were delivered to the central China. In the Western Zhou Dynasty (c.1100 B.C. - c.771 B.C.), Hotan jade became an essential part of imperial life. It was widely used in ceremonies and rites. There was a complete set of rules governing the use of Hotan jade. Since then, the tradition had been handed down for several thousand years.

Hotan jade is fine textured, soft and smooth. It is very tough, and its compressive resistance is superior to that of iron and steel. There are two types of Hotan jade, one from the mountains, and the other from rivers. It comes in four colours: white, green, black and yellow. Jades of different colours have different textures. White jade is regarded as the most valuable.

I saw a top-grade white jade piece at the bazaar. Weighing at least six kilograms, the jade was fine textured, without impurities.



## People-Watching in the Bazaar

The bazaar is not only a place for shopping, it is also a great vantage place to observe the many different types of people who gather in Xinjiang.

On the way to the bazaar, Uyghur men riding on donkeys are often seen wearing a large bag over their



shoulders. Called "Huerqing" in Uyghur language, it is an indispensable accessory in the daily life of Uyghur, Kazak, Tajik, Kirgiz and Mongol ethnic groups. It is usually made by hand with yarn or wool, with an opening in the middle and the two ends forming two separate small bags. At the opening there is a rope to buckle the bag shut. On a country fair day, the entire street is crowded with men wearing these Huerqing bags.

Today, exquisitely designed Huerqing bags have become souvenirs with an ethnic touch — serving two purposes at the same time.

In the bazaar square, a couple in splendid costume was singing and dancing to the accompaniment of a dongbula, a plucked stringed instrument, and hand drums. The song is melodious and somewhat melancholy. I asked a Uyghur friend to translate the words and it turned out to be a beautiful poem:

Over that high mountain float white clouds;

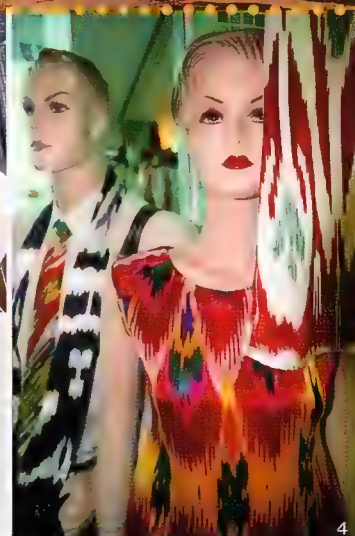
They are not really clouds, but flocks of sheep herded by my lover.

On that high mountain shines a red lantern;

It is not really a lantern, but the red skirt of my girl.



*Translated by Chen Qiuping*



1. The beautiful Uyghur ladies
2. The new bazaar at the Erdaoqiao market.
3. Uyghur peddlers would shout and beat drums to attract customers.
4. Aideli silk is the ancient handiwork in Hotan.
5. Tourist buses go directly to Erdaoqiao.

## Tips

### Transport:

#### By air:

Daily flights are available from main cities of China to Urumqi

#### Train:

Beijing — Urumqi T53/54

Shanghai — Urumqi T69/70

Xi'an — Urumqi 1043/1044

Zhengzhou — Urumqi T197/198

Lanzhou — Urumqi T295/296

#### Bus:

Urumqi has convenient bus transportation facilities with Buses No. 2, 8, 10, 16, 20, 36, 44, 50 extending to the Southern Railway Station of Urumqi. Buses No. 1 and 7 go to the bazaar area at Erdaoqiao. Taxis start at six yuan and are available everywhere.

### Accommodation:

Urumqi has various grades of hotels with the room price ranging between 80-1000 yuan. Cheaper rooms are also available from some guesthouses and inns, usually priced between 30-80 yuan.

Recommendation for backpackers: Xinjiang Hotel (991-5852511) and Eurasia Hotel (991-5856699).

Medium-grade hotels: Wangdefu Hotel (991-2301001) and Jingu Hotel (991-2826788)

High-grade hotels: Haide Hotel (991-2322828) and Hongfu Hotel (991-5881588).

### Notes:

1. Most of the residents and business people in the Erdaoqiao area are Uyghur people who believe in Islam. Consideration should be paid to Muslim rules and taboos.
2. Bargaining is allowed when shopping at the Erdaoqiao markets.
3. Be careful with the Uyghur food in Erdaoqiao — it is often greasy and sometimes has a strong smell.



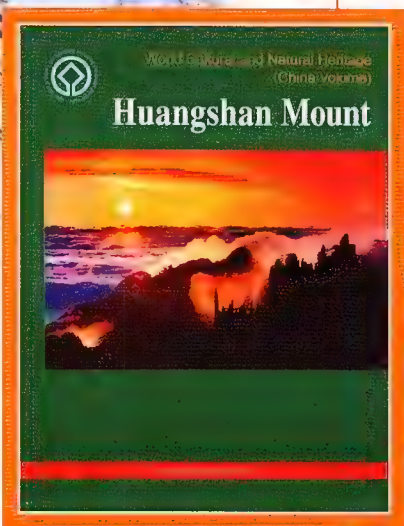
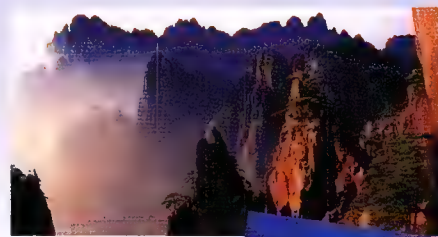


**Mt. Huangshan,** situated in the south of Anhui Province, is one of the most famous scenic areas in China. Being put into the World Heritage List, it is also granted with two laurels of cultural heritage and natural heritage by the UNESCO's World Heritage Commission.

The landscape of the mountain is a typical granite hoodoo landform shaped during the long geological periods by several tectonic movements in the crust. Mt. Huangshan has long been famous for its strange-looking pine trees, grotesque rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs.

All over one thousand metres above sea level, there are 77 peaks in the scenic area of almost two hundred square kilometres. Granite rock forests and rock columns together with massive rocks scatter everywhere. Moreover, Mt. Huangshan is a diverse ecosystem with a treasure of wildlife. There are approximately 1 450 species of plants, 300 species of vertebrates and 170 species of birds.

Combined unique scenery and magnificent sea of clouds, the beauty of Mt. Huangshan has continued to fascinate endless visitors. Catch a glimpse of its glory in this "Huangshan Mount" pictorial that is filled with breath-taking images taken by our team of photographers!



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# Ancient Business Town Deep in the Mountains **Zhenyuan**

Photos by Lu Xianyi Article by Shi Jizhong & Zhang Xiaosong

On the banks of the Wuyang River to the east of the Yunnan Guizhou Highlands lies a town of history and mystery — Zhenyuan. Well - positioned at the juncture of the Yunnan - Guizhou Pass and the Yuanjiang River waterway system, it has been the heart of river transportation since ancient times; hence its moniker, "water and land metropolis".

Not only is the town a gateway to southern Guizhou, but it is also known as the "Key to Yunnan and Guizhou". Since ancient passes via Guizhou from Hunan, Guangzhou to Yunnan and as far as Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and India all come through here, Zhenyuan serves as a strategic focal point of the Yunnan Gateway.





The Wuyang River makes a sweeping S-curve as it comes to Zhenyuan, which made it a strategically valuable military site. In 1388, a fortress was set up in Zhenyuan and 120 castles were built.

### Ideal Spot for Trading

The one-time defense enclave of Zhenyuan prospered due to its logistics hub advantage. Zhenyuan is at the upper reaches of the Yuanjiang River and controls the roads from Yunnan to Zhenyuan. Goods were first carried by road then transferred to ship after Zhenyuan, to travel to Changde of Hunan Province. Many businessmen saw opportunity in Zhenyuan, and



1. Zhenyuan Weicheng Wharf and Fucheng Wharf on the other side of the river are collectively named "Ports of Eternal Peace". The Wuyang River was once a busy shipping hub that could lead straight to the Dongting Lake and into the Yangtze River.

2. Wuyang River bends into an "S" curve here, splitting the ancient town in two, as if a Yin Yang symbol, Zhenyuan Weicheng is on the south bank, Zhenyuan Fucheng on the north, like the two dots on the symbol.





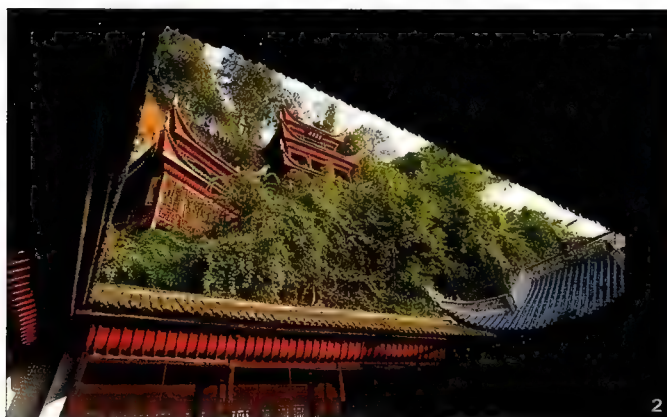


they travelled upstream with grain, salt, fabric and other necessities to trade in Zhenyuan. Then they bought back the produce of Yunnan and Guizhou, especially copper and tin, and shipped it downstream. Yunnan copper in Zhenyuan was worth more than triple its original price.

The well-used waterways were often jammed with boats, and wharves popped up along the banks of the river. By the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644), the street markets of Nanjing, Jiangxi, Raozhou and Dongguan were well established. In the Qing Dynasty (1616—1911), Zhenyuan became the commercial hub of Guizhou, and many industries formed. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, business thrived here, and shops great and small numbered in the hundreds.

### Business Associations Galore

The out-of-towners gathered in Zhenyuan according to their heritage. The most influential were the businessmen from Jiangxi, who formed the Jiangxi Society. The Fujianese built a magnificent Tianhou (Heavenly Queen) Palace on the strength of their finances and official standing in Zhenyuan, which became the gathering place for the Fujian Society. Traders from Anhui, Zhejiang and Jiangsu came together to launch the Jiangnan Society. Hunan and Hubei traders mixed together and created their own society, while Guangdongers and Guangxiers had their Society of the two Guangs. The finance world belonged to the Shanxi natives with their banks and the Shaan'xi locals who ran pawnshops. Small numbers of northern businessmen banded







into the Jiluyu Society (representing Hebei, Shandong and Shanxi), and it wasn't long before the Sichuan Society was formed, as more business people from the western province arrived.

### Slanted and Crooked Ancient Alleys

Leaving the hustle and bustle of the township, one enters the heart of the old town upon entering the deep narrow alleys. Here the ages dissolve and time stands still to reveal a startling vista of life in a by-gone era.

The winding and twisting alleys follow the shape of the mountains, and in the middle of the alleyway, one sees neither the start nor the end of the lane, the view obstructed by the natural mountain curves. On both sides of the alley are walls up to 10 m tall. The height of the walls accentuate the narrow and chilly alleyway, blocking out the sun entirely. The sound of traffic is drowned out in the narrow alley, and the pedestrian is left alone with just the "tap-tap" of footsteps on the dark stone ground.

Hidden within the main alleys which run mostly north-south, there are countless side-alleys, which turn the area into a veritable maze for unfamiliar sightseers. It is said that even when thieves entered the tangle of alleyways they were confused by the labyrinth and eventually became trapped prey.

Mountain streams flow steadily from the Shiping Mountain downwards, gushing from the rock crevices, pure and sweet. The



residents of the alleys depend on these waters, so much so that many alleys are named after the wells, hence the "Square Well Alley", and "Chen Family Alley" names. Some wells flow directly into family homes, and to guard against flooding, there is a criss-crossing drainage system underneath the alleys.

Unlike the houses on stilts along the river, the structures of the brick houses within the alleys are a combination of square courtyards of the north and quaint gardens of the southeast. They are by no means rustic, in fact they are reminiscent of wealthy merchants' mansions. These houses reveal an elegance and richness not imbued by wealth alone. Zhenyuan's residences stand out in their amalgam of the traditional square courtyard and the hill-house structures typical in

1. Zhenyuan street scene. The buildings here used to be mostly cantilevered structures of southern China. On the left is the old government building, now the Zhenyuan History Museum.
2. Wanshou Gong's theatre courtyard in the Jiangxi Society Club, has cleverly borrowed scenes of Qinglong Dong caves.
3. The gates of Zhenyuan residences within the alleys are never parallel or perpendicular to the street. The so called "slanted gates and crooked streets" theory embodies ancient Chinese custom to be inconspicuous and modest.
4. Wanshou Gong Theatre's coffered ceilings and murals are exquisite.





the highlands. They are as grand as castles, perfectly marrying stone and wood.

Of all the quaint features in Zhenyuan's local residences,



the "Slanted and Crooked Ancient Alleys" are the most impressive. Gates are never parallel or perpendicular to the alleys. In fact, everything is skewed, hence the name, "Crooked Street". The locals tell us that it fits with Feng Shui principles that "south is best", and thus encouraging riches

and preventing "loss of wealth".

### Enlightenment of a Scholar

After the opening of roads and the development of the water transport system during Yuan dynasty (1206-1368), Zhenyuan evolved into an epicentre for cultural exchange as well as a logistics hub. For a small township buried deep in the mountains, Zhenyuan's collection of cultural sites and historical relics is nothing short of astonishing: ancient city walls, tombs, gates, wharves, bridges, alleyways, springs, and houses — not to mention eight clubs and 12 theatres. But there's more — four caves, six palaces, eight pavilions, eight Buddhist temples and nine Taoist Temples.

Some say that Zhenyuan is a town blessed with many gods. However, the legendary immortals could only have a third of the spiritual market here, for the rest of the population are Buddhists and Confucians in equal measure.

Around 1410, the town government was set up and Confucianism was promoted. A Confucian Temple was built, and the Confucians' influence spread as people built a number of seminaries and shrined to the power of the pen.

2 About 100 years later, an eminent Confucian scholar Wang Yangming was stripped of his title and sent to Guizhou, experiencing unimaginable hardship along the way. Wang Yangming travelled twice through Zhenyuan, and Guizhou





was always significant to his life and thoughts. When he first came, he felt like it was the end of the world. Docking at Zhenyuan, the ancient road felt immensely sad and long. But when he got to Longchang to his low-ranking official role, he found inspiration. "The Longchang Enlightenment" became the starting point of the "Yang Ming Philosophy of the Mind". After two years, when Wang Yangming's official post was resumed and he left Zhenyuan, he had blessed with spiritual enlightenment. The seeds of "Philosophy of the Mind" were sown in Guizhou. When Wang Yangming left Zhenyuan by ship, he left an epistle for his friends and students, the famous "Zhenyuan Travel Letters".



### All Religions Welcome

In Zhenyuan, not only is the Confucian Philosophy embraced, but Taoism and Buddhism co-exist in harmony, forming a trinity of thought and religion. The club houses and temples of Buddhist and Taoist stand side by side.

In business-first Zhenyuan, people revere the God of Prosperity, who holds pride of place at Kuixingge Pavilion of Zhushou Qiao. The sacred figures of Ksitigarbha in Buddhism and the like, somehow found themselves in the Taoist palace, pavilion or temples. Confucians hold dear the virtues of loyalty and filial piety, while Buddhists relinquish all family ties once committed to Buddha, but the private temple built to commemorate ancestors later actually became a curious type of "nunnery of chastity and piety".

In mid 1800s, foreign imports such as Catholicism and Christianity came along. The Catholics set up their church on Zhou Dajie Street of Zhenyuan by a German priest named Weitzman. And the Christians had their church in Zhou Dajie Street also.

So great is the power of culture that the tiny "united nations" commercial hub of Zhenyuan became a veritable melting pot of China's cultural diversity, the customs and ideologies of different



1. "Cave within Caves" of the Qinglong Dong Caves
2. The pillar stones of the ancient architecture are important historical records of the southern Silk Road. The carvings of "unicorn presenting treasures" and god figures depict ancient Myanmar and other countries sending gifts to the Middle Kingdom.
3. "Horse head walls" are common in the local residences, they are aesthetically pleasing as they are practical in fire prevention.
4. Zhushou Qiao sits astride the Wuyang River. Qinglong Dong locates across the bridge and it combines Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism in one.





regions. Religions flourished here without fear of discrimination or interference.

### Pioneering Modern Iron and Steel Production



An iron ingot lies inconspicuously in a corner of the modest museum in Zhenyuan County, next to it are several English-inscribed fireproof bricks. More than a century after they were discarded, they found their way here. They formed a

footprint in the growth of China's modern industry.

The ingot is inscribed with four characters meaning —"No.1 Iron In the World", because it is the first piece of iron produced under "foreign methods". Hubei Province was regarded as the home of China's iron and steel industry, but Zhenyuan's Qingxi Steel Mill started even earlier, in 1890.

During the 1870s, a Japanese man named Inoue visited here to scope the feasibility of building an iron mill if the mines were available. Showing that there were some astute officials within the Qing dynasty government, before the Japanese plan could proceed, Guizhou's governor chose the manufacturing site of Qingxi. Aside from the quality of the iron produced, the edge was the wharf. Upstream it was accessible to materials, while finished products could be moved downstream for sale in Nanjing and Shanghai. The Steel Mill was built along the river and took up 10 ha. All the equipment was imported from England. It is not hard to find the origin of the fireproof bricks, as each brick is imprinted with three lines:

INGHAM & SONS

WORTLEY

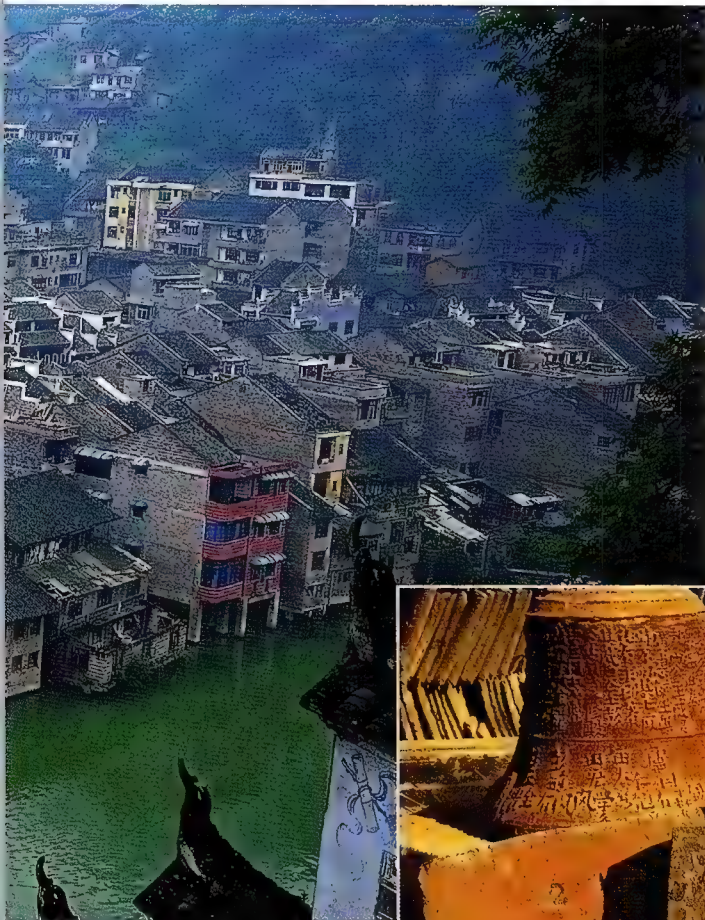
LEEDS

Guizhou's acquaintance with modern civilisation began in Zhenyuan, and the Qingxi Steel Mill was Guizhou's first modernised enterprise. At the time, China's shipping industry was in its infancy,



### Travel Tips

Zhenyuan and Guiyang (the capital of Guizhou Province) are connected by roads and the railway (the train journey takes 5 hours). Locally there is the Zhenyuan Mingcheng Hotel, which has good amenities. Worth mentioning is that Wuyang River — a state-level scenic attraction is divided into upper and lower reaches, named Shangyang and Xiayang respectively. Shangyang includes the areas from Huangping to Shibing counties, while Xiayang is located at the intersection of Shibing and Zhenyuan counties. Yang Sanxia (Yang Three Gorges) in the Xiayang part is the hotspot for tourism. It starts from as far west as the Wengpeng Dong caves of Shaping in Shibing County stemming to the east — Wuwang Dong of Zhenyuan Bantan. Services run from the Zhenyuan bus terminal to the ferry terminal at Wuyang River. Tickets cost ¥40 and the ride takes one hour. The Scenic Area admission costs ¥60 includes ¥10 admission to Qinglong Dong.



with small boats unfit for carrying such huge loads, so the cargo was shipped to Shanghai relays, making for a tough journey. The technical expertise arrived with no less hardship, and there were five foreign engineers from France, while the

technicians were mostly from the more developed Jiangsu and Zhejiang areas. In the summer of 1890, Qingxi Wharf was crammed with people and alive with the clamour of celebratory gongs to witness the birth of the first "No.1 Iron In the World" ingot. It must have been an exciting moment as the foreigners and Chinese rejoiced together in the first piece of iron manufactured in this ancient kingdom. For the Chinese who had just experienced the humiliating Opium War, the significance of the "No.1 Iron in the World" was extraordinary.

Qingxi Steel Mill also happened to be Guizhou's very first stock holding company. But sales were far below expectations, and the "intended" investment worth hundreds of thousands in ounces of silver from Zhejiang and Hunan provinces evaporated into thin air. Running out of fund channels, a joint venture was set up with Shanghai's Arnold Karberg Company. Unfortunately, the local investors were duped, and the investment turned into a loan of over 200,000 silver dollars owed to



the Arnold Karberg Company. The foreign banks reaped the interest first, yet once the Steel Mill was rendered insolvent, they withdrew the funds and sold the assets. Qingxi Steel Mill was running for 20 years, but it eventually crumbled under the crushing pressure of steep interest rates, high production costs and poor sales.

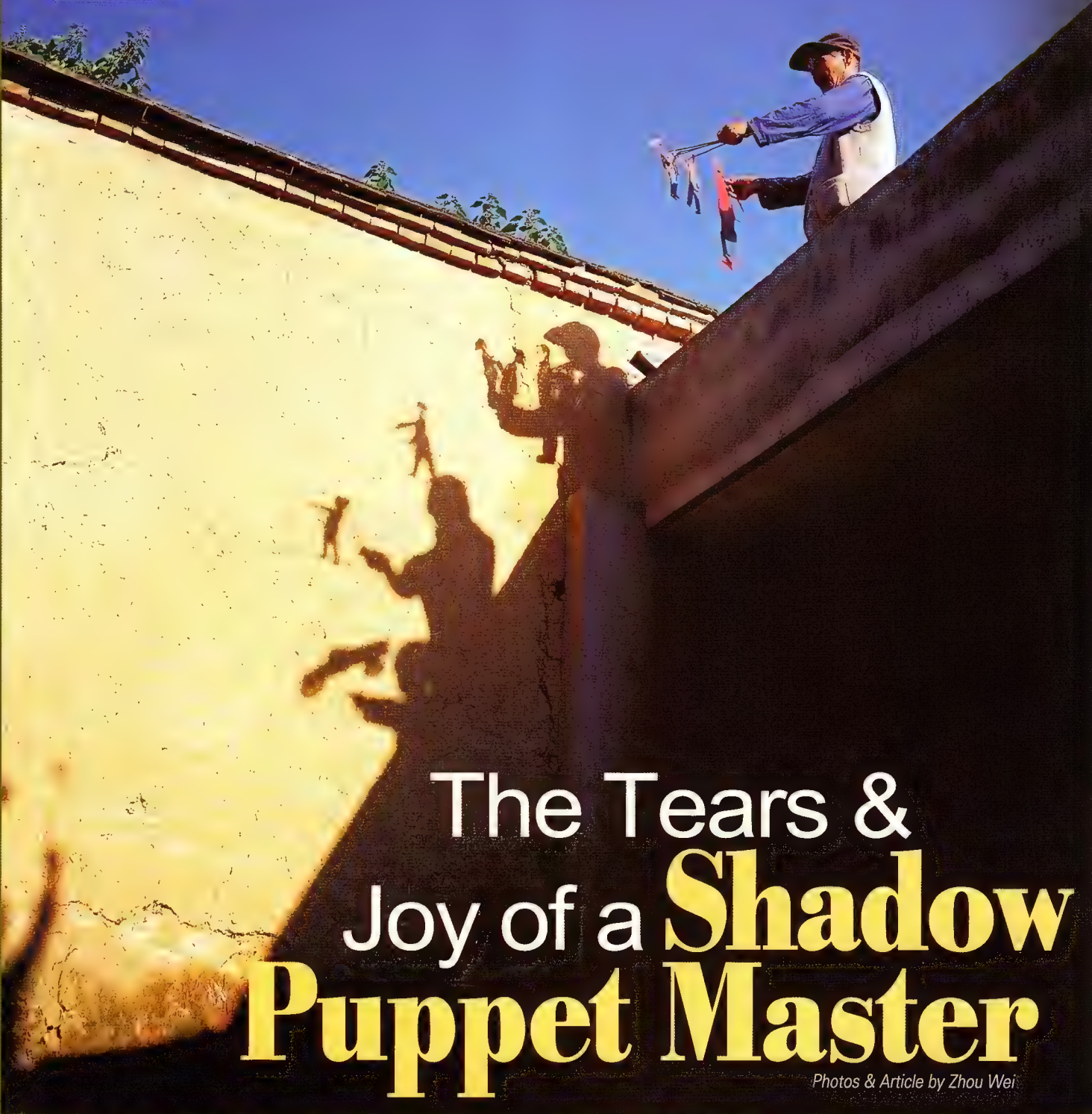
Where there used to be huge furnaces are now tall weeds; gone are the days of billowing smoke, now layers of rust lie in red-brown heaps beside the furnaces. The machinery seems to have vanished, but that doesn't stop the

trash man from making visits now and then. The furnaces were gradually stripped bare and "foreign bricks" found their way into ordinary people's homes. The fireproof bricks in the museum only survived after much bother on the part of the museum employees. The glory of the "No.1 Iron In the World" has evaporated as if smoke from the furnace, receding from people's memories, only the sizeable wharf for transporting iron and coal still stands proud in the autumn wind, a symbol of the past glories and a reminder of the fickle and ruthless world that is business.

*Translated by Cheng Lei*

1. The Wuyang River passing through the town of Zhenyuan
2. The slag left in the site of Qingxi Steel Mill
3. The iron ingot and fireproof bricks made by the Qingxi Steel Mill in 1900s.





# The Tears & Joy of a Shadow Puppet Master

Photos & Article by Zhou Wei

"To Live", a movie directed by top director Zhang Yimou, is about a troupe of shadow puppet (or leather-silhouette) artists in the Guanzhong of Shaanxi Province. Pan Jingle, who taught the lead character to sing the special shadow puppet songs in the movie, is the local master himself.

**G**uanzhong roughly refers to the capital of Shaanxi Province, Xi'an City, and its surrounding regions; this is the haven for many shadow puppet artists where the art form flourishes.

## Taking the Stage

Born in 1928, Pan Jingle is over 70 years old. His great-great-

grandfather and uncle were all stage performers. As a little boy, Pan became entranced by the shadow puppet shows. At 14, Pan was apprenticed to the old artist Liu Dewa in Simenqian village, learning how to sing the "wan-wan tone". The "wan-wan tone" is named after one of the instruments in which a bronze bowl (wan) is struck. It is a sect of the shadow puppet art form in Guanzhong. The tone different



from the traditional shadow puppet singing, which is richer and denser; instead, the "wan-wan tone" is softer and mellower.

The life of teenage apprenticeship during Pan's time was harsh. Most youngsters were laboured from dawn to dusk without even touching the puppets. Some fortunate ones might be able to finish their apprenticeship after three to five years, yet their lives were not any easier thereafter. Since majority of the shadow puppet shows are performed outdoor, the artists have to bear through snowy winters and scorching summers as well as unpleasant mosquito bites. It is a custom for shadow puppet artists to perform an all-night show, and therefore, once they start to sing, they have to sing at least one whole night even if there is only one audience. What's more, there is no bathroom break or sleeping break for artists.

Never had Liu Dewa imagined that his apprentice Pan could endure such hardships, but the talented Pan eventually mastered all the skills. The young novice went on the stage himself after about a year later, and he became an instant sensation. Pan performed "Wan Fu Tang (Thousand blessings Hall)" and "Tian Xian Pei (Heavenly matches)" for more than a month in a row! Such record earned him two barrels of maize and a stage name, Shi Liu Hong (Sixteen Red).

In stage performances you can toil to death yet no one notices. Master Pan has sung for over 60 years. Among the 8000 performances in all those years, his shows are different from others' in one important aspect — Pan alone is responsible for all the narration and singing. He uses a deep voice to play the role of masters, a high-pitch tone for wives, and a coarse tone for generals. Once the show begins, Pan sings round the clock. Sometimes he even plays the two-stringed



instrument, struck the gongs and drummed simultaneously. For grander performances, he has to read scripts and music while directing the whole show.

"Guang Yi She" was a shadow puppet troupe Pan Jingle formed in the 50s. It was well known to the hundreds of villages nearby. The masterpieces of the troupe include "Spring and Autumn Match", "Horse of Flame", "Purple Haze Palace", "Jade Swallow Hairpin", "Thousand Blessings Lotus", "Ten-Emperor Temple", "Golden Bowl Hairpin", "The Return of Zhuren", "White Jade Mansion" and "Plum Flower Hairpin". Pan was especially famous for his tragedies' performance. When

1. The 75-year-old artist Pan Jingle began his apprenticeship at 14. He has performed 8000 shadow puppet shows for over 60 years. Pan has collected many wonderful puppets at home, and they are all apples in his eye.
2. Before "Guang Yi She (The official name of Pan's troupe)" started, Master Pan held the screen by himself.



## About Shadow Puppet

- **The Origins of Shadow Puppets:** The Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty was grieving his deceased wife and commanded to have shadow puppet figures made to commemorate her. However, folk tale suggests that farmers were actually the makers of shadow puppets. Gathered around the bonfire in their spare time, some farmers started making shadow figures with their hands, which later transformed into shadow puppets (leather-silhouette). Yet, some people believed that the art of shadow puppet began in the Warring States Period at the main corridor of Guanzhong. The soldiers were homesick, and they would use the simplest shadow puppets to entertain themselves, thus giving rise to the military-related origin of the art.
- **Making Shadow Puppets:** Guanzhong shadow puppet is known for its meticulous craft. The puppets made by artisans in the past have become collector's items now, and many masterpieces are kept in overseas museums. Video recordings of Master Pan's troupe performances have now been collected by more than 10 countries. The shadow puppets are made of cowhides, and the hides has to go through the tedious process such as soaking, drying and flattening first. After a pattern is drawn on the leather, and it is then coloured, heated and ironed. The final step is to put on joints and little accessories. It takes some 20-odd steps to complete one puppet. A good shadow puppet is meticulously crafted, and has eye-catching colours with flexible joints.





playing in tragedies, he would be totally absorbed, and nothing could break his concentration.

### Act with Your Heart out

One evening, after a rainstorm, two people with mud-coated feet carried a lantern and came to invite Pan's troupe to perform at the Taitai Village for a family birthday celebration.

It was the time of Mid-Autumn Festival, and a fat full moon hovered over the village. A split second after the turquoise sky had fallen, the audience flooded into their seats. Aside from the performers, the stage had two special items: layers of quilts and a thermal flask hanging in the midst of the five performers. The flask allowed the performers to get a drink since they could not leave the stage once the show had started.

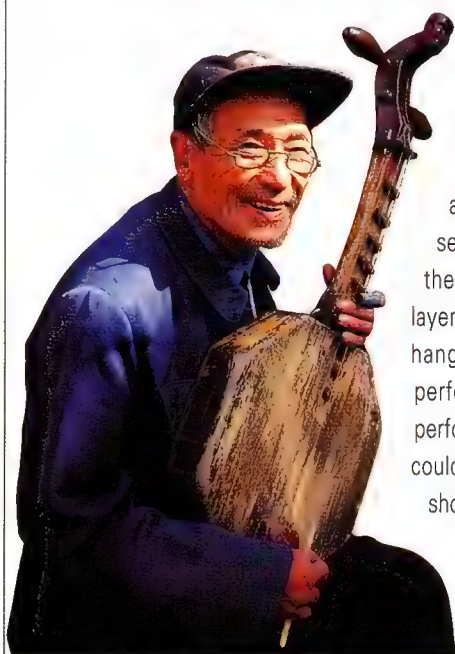
When the birthday party

host finished the greetings, the gongs and drums began to thunder and the show kicked off. Three shows were scheduled that evening in Taitai Village: "Coral Reefs Tower", "Killing Boat" and "Righteous Heroes". The artistic portions of the show focused on the music and tone and the martial art parts centred on acting. The shadow puppet show is a performance through the screen, on which puppets act, tell stories and communicate with the audiences. Meanwhile, singing is used to create a heated atmosphere.

With "The Return of Zhouren" reaching its climax, the old-timers wept. "Without genuine feelings, one could never act," Master Pan once said. The audiences were excited to have master Pan to perform for them because Pan's singing was very stirring. When he first began performing tragedies, Pan would recall the bitter conditions of his early life.

Although plays and singing are widely loved by villagers, performers are considered nobodies. They are to sleep on straw mats at night, and they are not allowed to be buried in their ancestral graveyard after death. The heart of the performers is full of bitterness, and only through performing, can the anguishes surface. Most audiences are elders, and they listened attentively to Master Pan's melancholy tone, which brought them to another world, and many shed tears.

A troupe is made up of five performers, known as "Wu Ren Mang (Busy Five)". "Qian Shu Er (Stick-holder)" is the second most important





actor who maneuvers the silhouette puppets beyond the light. "Shang Dang" is in charge of the yueqin (a four-stringed Chinese mandolin with a full-moon-shaped sound box), the trumpet, and the suona (a kind of simple oboe). "Xia Dang" is in charge of the Banhu (a wooden two-stringed instrument) together with other instruments. "Shang Dang" and "Xia Dang" have to co-ordinate very well with the Stick-Holder during performance. "Hou Cao" is in charge of percussion instruments including "wan-wan er (the copper bowl)". Out of the five, Master Pan acts as "Qian Sheng", the core of the show, and also the leader of the troupe. Pan was the famous actor of his generation and villagers came to watch the show because of him. Despite of this, Master Pan insisted on dividing the income into six equal portions. Apart from sharing with the other four actors of the show, the shadow puppets were considered performers as well.

### All the Way to Germany

Never could Pan's teacher have guessed that he would make it as far. His art performances allow Pan to make a living in Beijing, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Japan and even Germany.

Ms. Tomei from Hamburg, Germany, is an old friend of Master Pan. She became enchanted by shadow puppet shows and later studied the art. She did her best to promote Chinese shadow puppet shows, and became an expert of the art herself. Having self-studied some Chinese, Tomei kept in correspondence with Master Pan. She visited Pan twice and even invited Pan's troupe to perform in Germany.

When talking about Germany, Master Pan chuckled that Germans love to buy shadow puppets with red bandana, which cost about 200 yuan. He said that one customer preferred animal shadow puppets so




much that he actually brought a warrior puppet on a horse, but removed the warrior. Pan watched the English version of "To Live" in Germany and watched the Chinese version on a stopover in Hong Kong.

### Let Fate be the Call

Master Pan has six sons: the eldest passed away, the second works in a public bath house, the third on a farm, the fourth and fifth work in towns, and only the youngest son has a job that is related to shadow puppets. Pan has over 20 grandchildren, yet none of them has learnt the art of shadow puppets performance.

Who knows where the finishing line for this 75-year-old is? Shadow puppet to his life is like cigarettes to a chain-smoker — an inseparable addiction. In the past, one show earned him 25 yuan, as well as 2000-strong audiences. Nowadays, fewer and fewer people come to the show. Indeed, only a handful of elders really appreciate the show. These people, however, really cannot live without shadow puppets, for they have been with them their whole life.

The charm of Guanzhong shadow puppets has gradually dimmed. Beyond the screen, under the oil lamp, the marvelous shadow puppet performers attract ever-fewer audiences. In time, Pan Jingle and the shadow puppet performance beloved by so many generations would slowly fade away. 

*Translated by Dora Tsang*



1. For years, Pan's performances have been a respite from the farmers' hardships.
2. Master Pan made his own yueqin (a four-stringed Chinese mandolin with a full-moon-shaped sound box).
3. Master Pan's six-year-old grandchild, Pan Yi, loves his granddad's shadow puppet puppets.
4. The old man lives with his youngest son's family. Although the youngest son does not believe shadow puppet performing can offer good prospects, he has still learnt the art of crafting the puppets.





# How to Take Picture-Postcard Shots ?

*Photos & Article by Chan Yat Nin* — *Tips on Landscape Photography (II)*

Landscape photography is about scenes of land, water, sky, earth, vegetation and weather, usually embellished by people, animals, or structures. The secret of landscape photography lies in the judgement to create an outstanding composition.

Last time I discussed the composition and the handling of light and shadow. This time I would like to share with you my experience in shooting different kinds of scenery.



### ◀ Fishing Boat in the Sunset (Shanwei, Guangdong)

Both pictures were shot at the same spot using lenses of different focal lengths. The sky was very beautiful and swiftly changing, but since I had two cameras with me, fitted with different lenses, I could just as swiftly capture the different looks. The photo on the left captured the moment after the sun has set, with two-thirds of the sky painted in red. The photo below is shot with a long lens to highlight the descending sun and all that was around it. The boat provided a different point of interest and had to be waited for patiently until it sailed to its position.

Settings: Left: 20mm wide-angle, ISO100 slide, 1/30 sec, f/5.6

Below: 80-200mm lens, ISO100 slide, 1/30 sec, f/8



### ▲ Hunting Ground in Autumn (Hebei)

Using PL filter lens to sharpen the contrast between the blue sky and white clouds is the most effective way to shoot clouds.

Settings: 17mm lens, ISO 50 slide, 1/30 sec, f/8

## Reach for the Sky

The ever-changing sky brings infinite variety to landscapes. However, not every sky can enhance your picture. Without the appropriate technique, you may find it difficult to get the effect you want, no matter how beautiful the sky is. A common problem of landscape photography is how to handle the sky: should the sky be part of the picture? If so, how much? What should the contrast of light and colour be between the sky and land? What should be the exposure for the sky?

### ◎ Correct Exposure

An incorrect exposure will greatly reduce the beauty of the sky. The more magnificent the sky, the more difficult it is to catch it. This is due to the dazzling light reflected off the clouds that will affect the measuring of light. It is safer for the less experienced to use the average reading. Use a higher exposure if the light is too bright or if bright light takes up a large area. The more experienced photographer will take light readings from different areas in the frame and then judge the best exposure. To shoot sunrises and sunsets, for example, when a red sun is painting a sky of clouds in rich colours, you measure light separately from the sun, the clouds and the sky, and compute an average. Usually you give an average value weighted towards the rich orange colour or the part of sky with the middle range of blue. Use less exposure for the sun and more exposure if you want to catch the light from the lighter shaded area of the sky.

### ◎ Avoid the "Intruding Sky"

Skies that are grey, cloudy, or monotonous lack texture and look bland and dull. This kind of sky should not be included in the picture. If you have to take in some sky, use filters to add a bit of colour or some plant details to break the monotony. When the sky has nothing to do with the main subject but stands out and distracts from the main focus, it is an "intruding sky". Since photography is the art of composition formed by elimination, extra sky should be left out.

### ◎ Early Morning and Late Evening

Without doubt, the sky is at its most magnificent at dawn and dusk. Not necessarily at sunrise and sunset, though, but at the moment just before daybreak and at the last light after the sun has just set. An experienced photographer knows the importance of arriving early at your spot and being ready before the first light appears if you want to shoot a pre-dawn sky, and staying late until the last light for your sunset picture.



### ▼ Morning at Lijiang River (Yangshuo, Guangxi)

Both the sky and water of the Lijiang River before the sun rises are bathed in a harmonious blend of light, colour and contrasts. Filters are not necessary. The surface appears particularly placid and reflective before the arrival of cruise boats. To catch the lights from fishing boats, you have to be there early when the light from the sky is still weak.

Settings: 17-35mm wide-angle lens, ISO slide



### ▼ Clouds (Bashang, Inner Mongolia)

In spite of the rather common scenery around the lake, the reflection of the sky is wonderful, especially where the focus is.

Settings: 17mm lens, ISO50 slide, 1/15 sec, f/8. Slightly over-exposed because of the brightness of the water.



### © Build up Your Sky Photo Library

If you ever come across an unusually beautiful or atmospheric sky, photograph it even if you fail to locate any suitable landscape to set off or enhance it. In this era of digital photography, skies can be easily merged with other images to make a great picture.

## Photographing Water

The problems with photographing scenes with water are quite similar to sky pictures, and sometimes even greater.

### © Balancing Act between Sky and Water

When both the sky and the land are backlit, it will help if there is a stretch of water somewhere. The bright surface of the water can reflect the sky and balance the lighting of your picture.



### ☉ Reflection

Wonderful and mirage-like reflections often occur on a placid yet dull water surface, providing subjects for interesting pictures. Photographing such scenery upside down makes fun pictures as well.

### ☉ Use PL lens for Clear Water

When reflection looks set to ruin your shot, use a PL lens to deflect the light and allow you to shoot straight through to the bottom of the water.

### ☉ Capture the Fluidity of Water

The most effective way to capture flowing water is to shoot with a very slow shutter. A tripod is also necessary. Sometimes, if the light is too bright, even the smallest aperture cannot achieve a slow shutter exposure. In this case, attach a polarising filter, or a deep grey filter, to your lens.

## Photographing Mountains

Mountains make the most attractive landscape portraits but are extremely challenging to tackle. Taking mountain pictures is physically demanding, requiring considerable photographing technique, geographical knowledge, as well as luck in weather.

### ☉ Aim high

Mountains should be photographed from high points. The higher you go, the farther you see, the deeper the ravines and canyons below, the more complex the layers before you and the more magnificent the scenery is. If you go up into the mist, sooner or later you are likely to leave the mist behind and are able to capture the ethereal world of peaks rising up from mist and clouds.

### ☉ Clouds and Mountains

Clouds and mist are mountains' best friends, bringing ever-changing faces. A cloudless mountain is dry and lacks poetry. What I consider luck in weather is to run into mist that appears and disappears

conveniently, endless seas of clouds and sunshine. We can now easily check the local weather on the Internet and need only make our move when the weather is right. Clouds and mist of course make measuring light difficult, especially when the mountain top is back-lit and the clouds are very bright. To avoid under-exposure, treat this sort of scene the same as you would treat bright sky and water.

### ☉ Be Patient

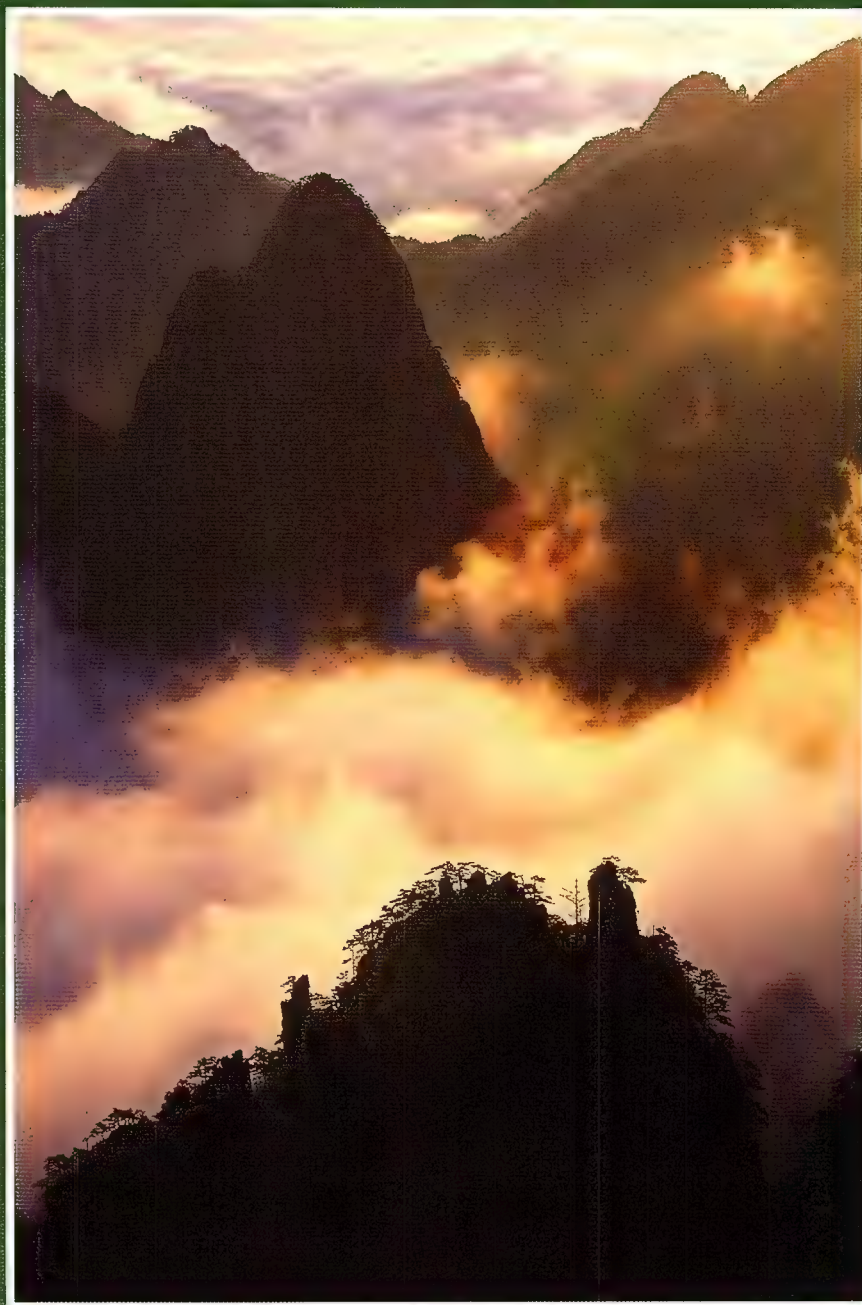
Every mountain or hill has its best

vantage point for photos. This is the spot where you can see a huge range of changes in the surrounding scenery because of the unpredictable clouds and light. All you need then is immense patience.

*Translate by Megina Chan*

### ▼ Misty mountains (Huangshan Mountain, Anhui)

The mist brings a magical quality to the jagged peaks. The clouds are bright but the peaks take up a bigger area and render an average reading of light. No need for greater exposure. (Photo by Xie Guanghui)



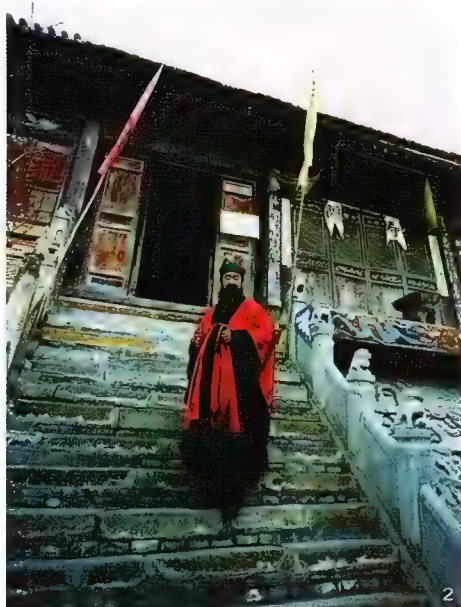


# The Celestial and Hollow Mt. Kongtong

Photos by Shi Baoxiu & Chen Xu Article by Chen Xu

If you go 12 km west from Pingliang City, Gansu Province, you will come to Kongtong Mountain, home of the Kongtong Martial Arts School. The school is on a similar footing to the famous Wu Dang, E'mei and Huashan Martial Arts Schools.

Nineteen years after ascending the throne, the legendary Yellow Emperor spent three months here fasting and seeking wisdom. Later monarchs, such as the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C. - 207 B.C.) and Emperor Wu Di of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D.220) vied with each other in following this practice. Numerous pilgrims to Mt. Kongtong from generation to generation made it one of the most famous mountains in China, and it is registered in the earliest historical archives. It is also known as one of the 12 celestial mountains in China.



Mount Kongtong is a branch of Liupan Mountain, with an elevation of 2,123 m above sea level. It has several dozen peaks of various sizes. Strange formations, unique caves, odd looking rocks and the sea of clouds are regular features of this mountain. The summit is very precipitous, forests form a natural screen of greenery in the northwest, hence the name Cuiping (Jade Screen) Peak.

In the first month of spring I climbed alone the back slope of Mt. Kongtong. From time to time I saw deep and secluded caves. When I hit my stick against the rock, an empty sound echoed back. When I arrived at Shangtianti (Ladder to Heaven) the sound of my footsteps echoed again and again. This convinced me that Kongtong was a mountain with a hollow centre. Caves abound here, and they are all hollow as the Chinese name Kong (hollow) Tong (caves) suggests.





### Temple of Supreme Harmony

On the precipice and steep peaks are rows of ancient buildings nicely and intricately arranged. This is the place where Daoist priests built their temples and found ways to prolong longevity two thousand years ago. Emperor Wan Li, of the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644) ordered the building of temples that replicated Mt. Wudang. As a result, Kongtong Mountain thus became the biggest Daoist temple-compound in northwest China. The biggest Daoist temple is Taihegong, or Temple of Supreme Harmony.

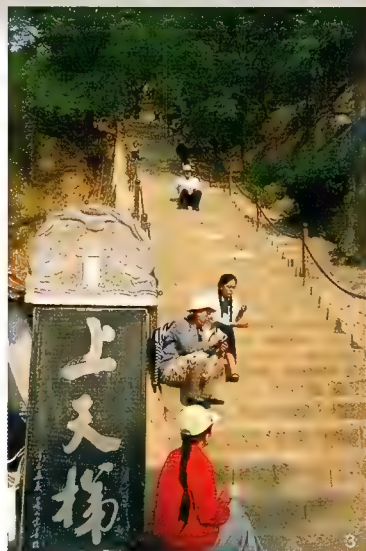
Standing below the gate tower of Temple of Supreme Harmony, I marvelled at Zhongtai (the Central Platform) and numerous temples below. They stood in absolute quietness in the evening mist, as if they had been lapsed into deep silence from time immemorial.

I tapped the knocker of a small door below the bell tower. The warm lamplight was visible from the outside, and the door was opened. Two Daoist priests were sampling tea before a small table while studying Daoist theory. They pointed out the way to the guest room and the door was closed at once behind me.

### Life in the Priesthood

The guest room was rather small. There were two huge brick beds, and I

1. Mt. Kongtong (left) is quite steep, but the Buddhist temples (right) are relatively flat.
2. The daoist is to perform his religious duties at dawn daily.
3. When I arrived at Shangtianf (Ladder to Heaven), the sound of my footsteps echoed again and again. This convinced me that Kongtong was a mountain with a hollow centre.
4. On the precipice and steep peak tops are rows of ancient buildings nicely and intricately arranged.



### The Tragic Life of a Woman Priest

From the Central Platform you can see a Daoist temple in courtyard style below. This is Zhaogong, a Daoist monastery. As I walked into the monastery, I asked in a loud voice, "Is Priest Zongqing here?" A man in a side room was chopping vegetables. She looked at me kindly. "Do you know her?" Since I detected a wry smile on her face, I replied, "I don't know her, but I know you are Priest Zongqing." She laughed like a person caught in a mistake. She invited me to come in.

During her adolescence she was called by her given name, Zhang Huiyang. She got married in 1958. Her husband with whom she lived for only eight days joined the army, and nothing was ever heard of him again. Three years later he wrote her out of her village. Many died, and Zhang Huiyang, at 23, was forced to leave her hometown. She begged her way to the city of Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province, where she ended up a living. During this time she met her old husband and wrote him many letters, but he did not answer. To cope with the emotional trauma, she went to a monastery that had once helped her.

In 1983 she returned to Zhuanglang and begged for donations to build Zhenzhan Daoist Temple. On the 19th day of the first lunar month the following year, a man came to the temple and asked her to perform religious rites. When the man wrote down his name, tears came to her eyes. He was none other than her husband, whom she had dreamed of seeing for more than 20 years. She calmed herself. She chanted three scriptures for three hours straight while the man was on his knees. Afterward, she asked him the reason of his seek the Daoist deities. He told her that his wife was sick. "Who is your wife now?" Zhang stared at the man. He raised his head and saw her face in tears. "Are you Zhang Huiyang?" Then he broke into sobs.

In the summer of 1984 Zhang Huiyang signed a divorce document with her husband. She left the Zhenzhan Daoist Temple, sad and disappointed. The following year she was ordained and formally became a priest at Mt. Kongtong. Her priest's name is Li Zongqing, given by her teacher whom she shows great respect.





surveyed the room from the bed near the door. If not for the small deities, the room would be no different from a small room in a farmer's home. My roommate, an elderly man, was boiling bitter tea. The tea was fragrant, and the steam from the boiling tea warmed the room. I gathered he must be a lay priest, because he certainly wasn't a tea specialist.

When I woke up the next morning I saw only darkness outside the window. I stared blankly for a while and heard the deep and sonorous sound of a bell, which had awakened me. I put on my shoes and went out into the shivering cold. When I finished washing my hands and face and brushed my teeth I said goodbye to the senior priest, who told me that it was time for him to perform his duties. I followed him. He pushed the heavy wooden gate of Temple of Supreme Harmony open and burned incense before the Daoist deity. He kowtowed three times in a pious manner. I followed him to the hall dedicated to the God of Zhen Wu. No sooner had I ascended the stairway, I heard the chanting of scripts, with the accompaniment of musical instruments. The rhythm and cadence delighted the ear, and I sat on the threshold and listened to the sounds of nature outside. When the chanting was finished, it was broad daylight. When I asked the priest for his name, I was told that he was Mr. Ma, the Senior Daoist Priest of the temple.

Senior Daoist Priest Ma had entered the priesthood 13 years earlier in Longmengdong, Shaanxi Province. He had come to Mt. Kongtong 10 years earlier. "Since I still failed to get myself married at 36, I was so frustrated that I entered into the priesthood." He seemed lighthearted about his misfortunes.

### Thunder? Mountains Collapsing?

Cangsongling, the most striking peak on Mt. Kongtong, is in an entanglement of peaks, rocks and gullies.

Leishengfeng is a deep gully that stands in the

vale. When lightening and deafening thunder hit, the mountains seem to be collapsing and the earth cracking up.

Here, the poet Zhang Sanfeng inscribed his poems on the stone tablets, which became a historic witness to Zhang's refusal of an official appointment:

- "One: A small boat left the mundane world;
- Two: One earns respect by himself;
- Three: Go to Penglai Island for the sake of celestial companionship;
- Four: Establish a name on beaches of the Four Seas;
- Five: Transcends life and death amidst waves of the Five Lakes;
- Six: Ferrying by river to catch fine fish on six occasions;
- Seven: Seven-stringed instrument is broken with no one to play it any more;
- Eight: The Eight Daoist Immortals welcome me;
- Nine: I have a place of abode in the uttermost layer of the Heaven;
- Ten: I did not betray the favours of the imperial edict for 10 years. I meditated on the wisdom of longevity for 10 years. I returned to the mountain and no longer have the mind to read the imperial script."

*Translated by He Fei*

1. Since Mt. Kongtong is very precipitous, it was extremely difficult to transport bricks and tiles to the mountain without the help of mountain sheep. As a result, a stone statue of a mountain sheep stands on the mountain in remembrance. (Photo by Shi Baoxiu)
2. The perimeter of the South Platform is a good spot to take pictures of the sunset. (Photo by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Linkong Pagoda in Baoqing Monastery built in the Ming Dynasty (Photo by Shi Baoxiu)

### Tourism Information

**Transportation:** Two routes to Mt. Kongtong: Get on a bus from Pingliang City to the big dam in Kongtong Reservoir, ascend the mountain from the front or else go to Tashuoping and ascend from the rear. The fee is the same, about 10 yuan. We can also get a special chartered coach for three yuan from the Passenger Transport Dept.

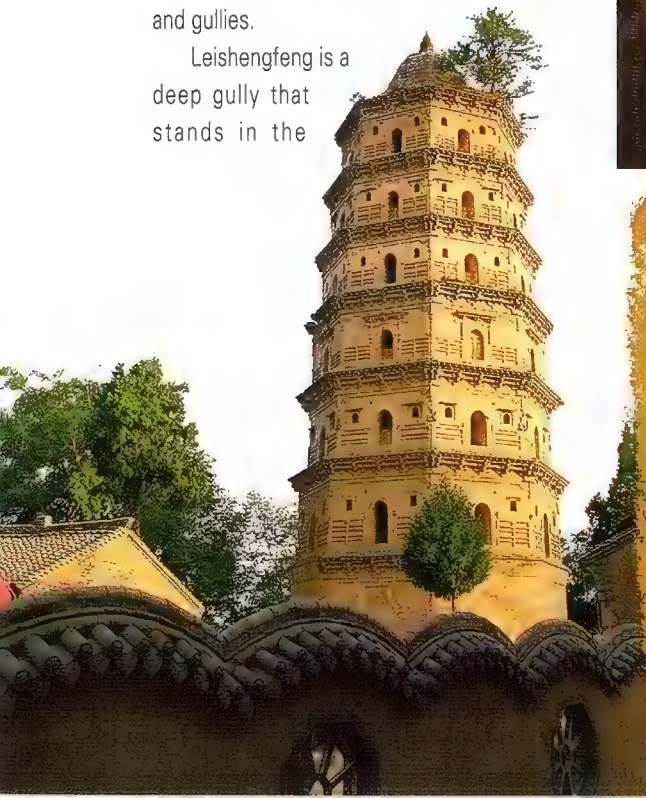
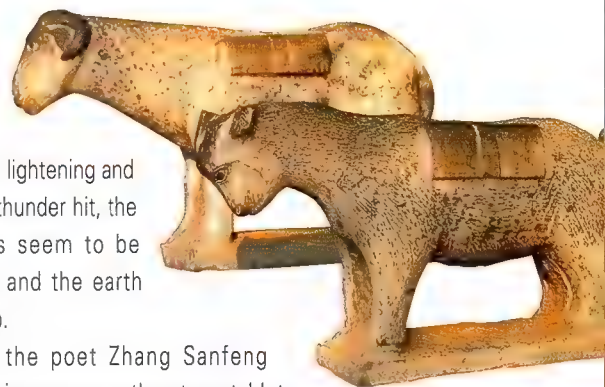
**Ticket:** 65 yuan, including sightseeing on five platforms — East, West, South, North and Central.

**Opening Hours:** 8:00-18:00

**A Word of Caution:** You are not allowed to take pictures of the murals of the Ming Dynasty in Temple of Supreme Harmony.

**Lodging:** Two-star Pingliang Hotel is located at 84 Green West Street (90 Da Jie, west of People's Square, Renmin Guangchang). There are standard rooms and apartments for three or four people. The price is reasonable. Telephone: 10939 821 242.

7:35-11-8 Yuan







# Readership Survey

*China Tourism* always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

**Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birthplace of Raging Sandstorms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uygur Bazaar in China's West	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Shadow Puppet Master	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to Take Picture-Postcard Shots?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel Tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Opinions: _____					

Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of trips to China in the last 5 years: \_\_\_\_\_

## Where (how) did you first see *China Tourism*?

☐ Subscription ☐ Newsstand or bookstore

☐ Hotel Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_

## Main purpose for reading *China Tourism*?

☐ Planning trips ☐ General interest in China's customs, scenery, etc. ☐ Business

☐ Tourist Trade purposes ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_

## What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

## What are your suggestions for improvement?

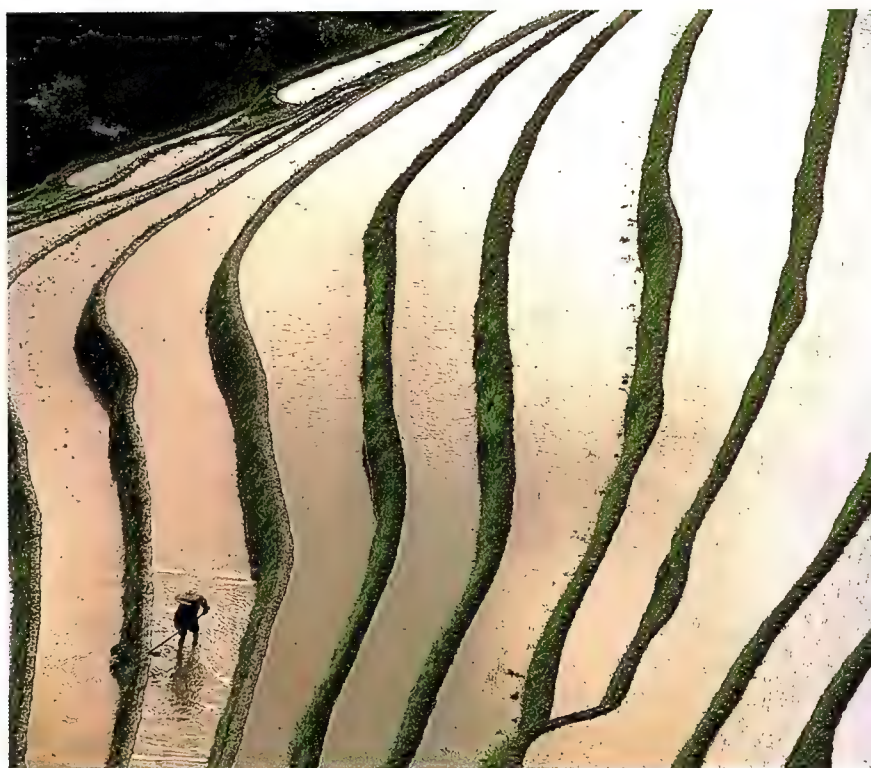
Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

\*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.



# Human - Nature Relationship

Article by Sun Min



It was in the 6th century B.C. that an ancient Greek philosopher first drew a map of the world. In the eyes of a philosopher, such map is the human interpretation of our world and its place in the universe through an application of geometry and astronomy.

Throughout history, from the Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean, to the conquests of Alexander the Great (Macedonia, 356-323 B.C.), the rise of the Roman Empire, the Crusades, the Great Age of Exploration and right through to today, people have explored the earth. The development of geography

helped to expand our understanding of the world around us.

Though ancient Chinese people were encouraged by Confucius' view to study astronomy and geography, but Confucius' principle also emphasised on family value, restraining people from travelling abroad while their parents were still alive. This particular tradition was far from conducive to the development of geography. As a result, Xu Xiake (1586-1641), a traveller and geographer of the Ming Dynasty, was without earlier or later counterparts.

Various schools of geography

developed during the last century to explore our relationship with the world. It was unfortunate that ideological considerations led early academic study in China to take its lead from the Soviet Union's geographers of the 1940s. They separated the science into two independent branches of learning: physical geography and economic geography. By the 1960s the approach had been abandoned in Russia but by then it had influenced two generations in China.

In middle school, the textbooks of the day told us that geography is about industry, agriculture, transportation and communication, climate, resources, products, population and ethnic communities. This was a model in which our relationship with the land becomes reduced to a mere consideration of usable resources.

Where the textbooks did address the issue of our relationship with the earth they did so in the context of man conquering nature and exploiting the resources of the motherland to the maximum. The resulting overexploitation of this wonderful land of ours has handed down an empty legacy of dull statistics.

A recent report said it had taken 20 billion yuan to tackle pollution in the Huaihe River valley. This exceeds the sum total of the value generated by all of the businesses in the river valley over the years.

Perhaps we should not lay the blame entirely on a set of now outdated geographical concepts. However, they



did serve to conceal from us the importance of our relationship with the earth. They discriminated against what was necessary to support life in favour of economic expediency.


China still has a long way to go in terms of human geography. Fortunately more and more organisations and individuals have begun to focus on the conditions necessary to support the lives not only of people but also of all the other forms of life on earth. Humankind is just one part of the cycle of life and must learn to live in harmony with the laws of nature. Field observations are now bringing greater opportunities to update our understanding of how we interact with the earth.

Human geography actually serves as a

bridge of mutual understanding among various disciplines. In the words of French geographer P. Vidal de la Blache, "Geography in exchange for the help it has received from other sciences, can bring to the common treasury, is the capacity not to break apart what nature has assembled, to understand the correspondence and correlation of things, whether in the setting of the whole surface of the earth, or in the regional setting where things are localised."

Human geography has become a controversial topic in recent years. It has suffered from a superficial approach and might even come to be dismissed as little more than some sort of tourist guide. We are in danger of seeing a serious observation of the world abandoned in favour of a trivial search for

mere novelty. A pragmatism that targets the quick result and the quick buck may well turn out to obscure a proper understanding and depth of knowledge of the nature of things.

The world of geography is a vivid place. It provides us with new perspectives and methods of observing what is around us. The earth itself is a wonder. One need only think of the evolution of the planet, the origins of life, the extinction of species and the growth of civilisation. From paleontology to modern biology, from geology to archaeology, from exploration to a historical review of civilisation, geography can help us appreciate the real place of life on earth. 

*Translated by Chen Qiuping*







(by Chan Yaf Nin)

# The Tram of Our Time

Photos & Article by Maggie Lam

Tram is one of the oldest, cheapest and slowest transportation in Hong Kong. Here, these old-fashion double-deck trams rattle on the streets jammed with Mercedes and BMW daily.

Ever since the trams made an appearance on the streets in 1904, they have been dominating on the busiest streets on Hong Kong Island despite many other excellent forms of competing transport, such as MTR and buses. Strangely enough, trams have never lost their appeal.

Ever wonder why these 100-year-old trams are still up and running in such a modern city?



## The Trams Will Go on

Although the trams used to be the fastest transportation a century ago, they seem almost too inefficient, too noisy and too old to be running in Hong Kong in this day and age. First of all, most trams have poor windows that leak water when raining. Secondly, since they have no heating or air-conditioning, they are too cold for the winter, and definitely too hot for Hong Kong's long and scorching summer. And thirdly, Hong Kong people are always in a hurry to get from point A to B, why would anyone have patient for trams?

Most western countries' trams were phased out and abandoned, but the trams in Hong Kong have





miraculously survived and become a vital part of public transport. As a matter of fact, they are the pride of the metropolis — the channels that connect people to the past memories of the city. Trams remain extremely popular, and they are also the major tourist attraction in Hong Kong.

### Transport to Another World

Hong Kong can be roughly divided into three main areas, namely New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. Hong Kong Island is the busiest of all, as it is the centre around Victoria Harbour.

Trams run along what used to be the waterfront of Hong Kong Island; yet, the Victoria Harbour can no longer be seen enroute because of the massive land reclamation over the years. They cut through the heart of the city, from Kennedy Town in the west to Shau Kei Wan in the east. This is the most colourful and cheapest way (~US \$0.25) to visit all the tourist hotspots in the northern end of Hong Kong Island.

Kennedy Town is where the major commercial centres such as Central and Western District are nearby. On the other end of the island, there is Shau Kei Wan — a dense residential district with approximately over 600,000 people, which is up to 10% of the total population. In between both ends of the island lie Wan Chai and Causeway Bay. Wan Chai is well-known for its restaurants and clubs, whereas Causeway Bay is crowded with shopping complexes. Be sure to pay attention when the tram stops at the



(by Chan Yat Nin)





intersection in front of the 13-storey Japanese department store Sogo in Causeway Bay, for this is one of the world's most crowded crosswalks!

The tram route is very straightforward; it goes from one end to the other with only one detour — off to Happy Valley (horse racecourse) — so it's impossible to get lost.

### The Best Time to Catch a Ride

Trams in Hong Kong can be very crowded, for they have an average

of 240,000 passengers daily. During the busier periods of the day, trams often stack up one after another when there are too many of them running on the railway lines simultaneously.

Try to avoid the tram during rush hour, because riding at night is a much more relaxing way to visit the city. Travelling in the lower deck of the tram allows you to take a closer look at the local street life, while taking the front seats of the upper deck offers you the best views of the town. The magic of trams lie in transporting passengers in slow rhythm, for it gives people time to savour the fast-pace city.

## Trams Route



Trams are only available on Hong Kong Island, running from Kennedy Town to Shau Kei Wan (via Happy Valley racecourse). Unlike a bus, you get on a tram from the rear gate through the rotating bars and out at the front. You ride first and pay later. Be prepared to make room for people who shuffle forward as the tram pulls closer to their stop. The flat fare is HK \$2 (\$1 for senior or child), and you may pay with coins or Octopus card\*.

The rail system is 13 km long and it runs together with other vehicles on the street. There are a total of nine overlapping routes.

Its operation relies on the electric current from overhead cables. The trams generally move under 40 km per hour, they are fairly slow and safe. The tram service starts at 6:00 a.m. and ends at 1:00 a.m. every day. Since the interval between each tram is only a few minutes, many people find it very convenient.

Majority of the operating trams are old with colourful advertisements, but a few new ones are green and white coloured with air-conditioning.

The trams have seven terminal points: Kennedy Town, Whitty Street, Western Market, Causeway Bay, North Point, Shau Kei Wan and Happy Valley respectively. In between these terminal points, there are several stops: Sogo and Pereival Street stop at Causeway Bay, Pacific Place stop at Admiralty, Prince's Building, World Wide House and Landmark stop at Central.

\*Octopus card is a smart card used in an electronic payment system in Hong Kong. It is rechargeable, and can be used for MTR, buses, trams, ferries, convenience stores, supermarkets, and some restaurants and parking garages.





## Feature Story: The Dwindling of the Yangtze Three Gorges

On June 1, 2003, the Three Gorges Dam formally began to store water. Fifteen days later, the water level in the area of the gorges rose from 66 metres, the historical average level, to 135 metres. The magnificent and perilous Three Gorges created by the superlative workmanship of nature have eventually transformed to meet the need of human beings. Nevertheless, the memories relating to the old Three Gorges will never fade in the minds of the Chinese people....



### Discoveries: Classic Chinese Tea: Pu'er

Since Pu'er, the king of Chinese tea, is all about fermentation, most tea masters need to devote their whole life to perfect the art of processing tealeaves.

Most people believe that pu'er tea originated from the Pu'er County, Yunnan. This is just a beautiful mistake. Pu'er actually comes from the regions of Xishangbanna, Simao and Lincang in Yunnan. The Pu'er County is merely where the tea gets gathered and sold.



### On the Way: Datong's Coal Mine

Datong of Shanxi Province is dubbed the cradle of coal. It tops the nation on its coal reserves, extraction and export capacity. Having over 20 large-scale modern coal mines, Datong has trucks carrying loads of coals in and out of the area by the minute.

### Nature: Searching for the Tuyuhun Summer Palace

Dulan County is a township of great historical and cultural importance in the Qinghai basin; it was the flourishing capital of the Tuyuhun Kingdom from 417-688.



Unfortunately, the prosperous kingdom became complacent in its guard against enemies, and the entire kingdom perished with only traces of the old palaces left....



# BITS AND PIECES ABOUT THE THREE PARALLEL RIVERS OF YUNNAN

The Three Parallel Rivers site covers land of some 1.7 million ha. With it come nine nature reserves and 10 scenic spots variously belonging to Lijiang City, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture. Located where the three geological regions of East Asia, South Asia and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau meet, the site is representative of rare alpine landforms and their evolution, and one of the richest biodiversity areas in the world.

Every kind of landscape to be found in the northern Hemisphere other than desert and ocean can be found here, including magnificent snow-capped mountains and glaciers, precipitous Danxia cliffs and wonderful Karst formations. The region has 118 snow-capped mountains over 5,000 m above sea level, varying widely in form. With them come many hectares of untouched forest and several hundred glacial lakes.

The snow-capped Meili Mountain at 6,740 m is the highest mountain of all. Crystal-clear and sparkling, the 10,000-year-old glaciers make its way very slowly from high on the peak down to the Mingyongcun Forest at 2,700 m. It is considered to be the world's finest monsoon glacier and remarkable for its descent to such a low altitude. For thousands of years, Tibetan people have regarded the Meili Snow Mountain as a holy mountain. To this day they respect the need to obtain permission before going on the mountain.



weathered away to leave formations said to look like tortoises. On the aptly named thousand tortoise mountain, one can imagine at first a single large tortoise and then on closer inspection see it to be made up of the regular ranks of thousands of small tortoises.

Consisting of seven geographical clusters of protected areas within the boundaries of the Three Parallel Rivers National Park, the region is also an epicentre of Chinese biodiversity. Though accounting for less than 0.4% of the area of China, it plays host to more than 20% of the country's most important plants and 25% of its animal species. Today, the region is home to 77 animals under state-level protection, including the Yunnan golden monkey, antelope, snow leopard, Bengali tiger and black-necked crane. It has 34 kinds of plants under state-level protection including the China fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*), the spinulose tree fern (*Cyathea spinulosa*) and the Chinese yew (*Taxus chinensis*). Every year when spring comes, the region becomes a sea of flowers. There are 200 kinds of azaleas, nearly 100 kinds of gentian (*Gentiana scabra*), primroses, Scrophylariaceae, Cypripedium and lilies.

Meanwhile, the region is inhabited by 16 ethnic groups, one of the few areas in the world where different kinds of people, language, religions and customs live in harmony.

In 1985, a UNESCO official discovered this world wonder from among satellite scanning images. In 1988, the Three Parallel Rivers area was designated as a state-level scenic attraction with the approval of the State Council. Five years later, the area was added to Unesco's World Heritage List in 2003.



The Danxia landforms in the Laojun Mountains in the Lijiang Area, picturesque in their forest setting, are both the biggest and the best-formed examples of this geomorphology in China. In places, the red cliffs have



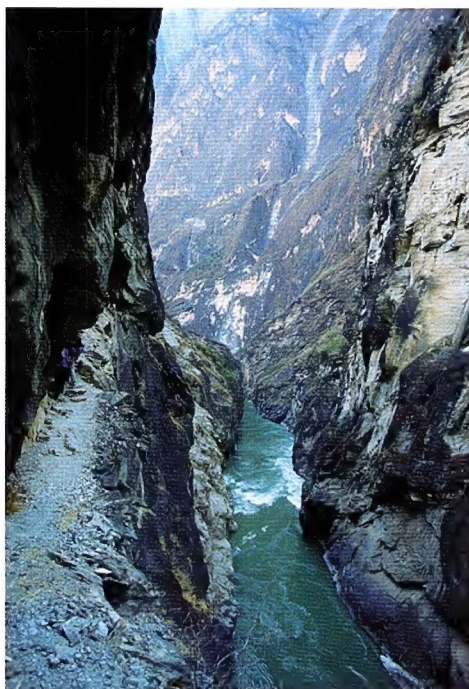
## GETTING THERE & ACCOMMODATION See Feature Story p.42

### MAIN ATTRACTIONS

The Three Parallel Rivers area features beautiful natural scenes and diversified geology and geomorphology. There are 4,000-m-deep valleys, over 6,000-m-high snow mountains, the southernmost snow mountain of the world, a marine glacier reaching 2,700 m in low latitude, well-developed and well-preserved glacial landforms, high mountain glacial lakes, high mountain Danxia landforms, volcano and magma rocks, high mountain karst topography, karst caves, travertine waterfalls and grassy marshlands.

#### 1. Nu Gorge

Being the second biggest gorge in the world, the 300-km-long Nu River Gorge is flanked by two 4,000 m high mountains, which have an average altitude of over 3,000 m on either side.



Village. The variegated karst landform of the tableland is an outcome of the continuous piling up of calcite sediments, resulting from the disintegration of calcium bicarbonate contained in the water.

#### 5. Shangri-la

This beautiful land with snow-capped mountains, wide meadows and rivers is an untainted natural paradise. Three snow-capped mountains, Meili, Baimang and Haba, tower over a landscape crisscrossed by the Three Parallel Rivers.

#### 2. Meili Snow Mountain

Lying on the border between Yunnan and Tibet, the Meili Snow Mountain in Dexin County, is known for its main peak, which rises over 5,000 m above sea level and has not yet been scaled by man. The main peak is surrounded by 13 lesser peaks, and at its foot lies a modern monsoon maritime glacier, a geographical rarity, given its low latitude and high altitude.

#### 3. Hutiaoxia (Tiger Leaping Gorge)

Extending for 16 km, Hutiaoxia Gorge, with a drop of about 3,800 m, is believed to be one of the world's deepest canyons. At its narrowest point the gorge is only 30 m wide. It was said that a hunted tiger once made its escape to the other side in a single bound — hence the gorge's name.

#### 4. Baishuitai (White Water Terrace)

The 300 m<sup>2</sup> White Water lies on a mountain slope 2,380 m above sea level in Baidi

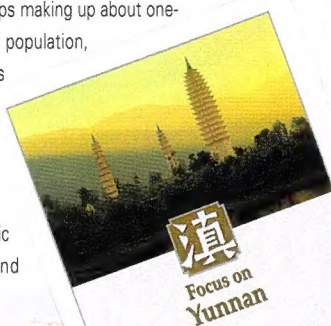




Hard cover ~~HK\$150~~ HK\$120

### Focus on Yunnan

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-La, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



Paperback ~~HK\$55~~ HK\$76  
Hard cover ~~HK\$150~~ HK\$120

### Focus on Fujian

Situated on the southeast coast, Fujian Province overlooks Taiwan Island across the Taiwan Strait. Its mountainous landscape includes the Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area, one of the UN World Heritage sites in China. The province's zigzag coastlines, numerous beaches and charming seas offer spectacular scenic beauty as well as historical and cultural interest in such places as the Drumming Wave Islet in Xiamen and the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island.



Paperback ~~HK\$55~~ HK\$76  
Hard cover ~~HK\$150~~ HK\$120

### Focus on Shanghai

Shanghai, the largest metropolis in China, and formerly the Far East financial centre, has experienced dramatic development over the past century. The world-famous Bund along the Huangpu River shows you buildings of different historical periods and varied architectural styles, while skyscrapers are rising in the new area of Pudong. Shanghai's multiculturalism is seen in its music — operas, nostalgic jazz and discos — and in the busy commercial district of Nanjing and Huaihai roads.



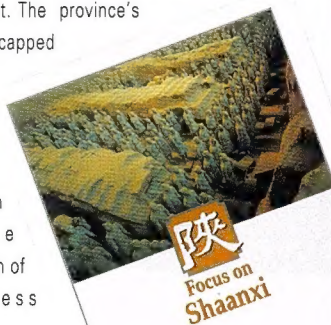
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Each book, focusing on a province or city, presents unique scenery and customs, and provides you with useful tourist information

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### Focus on Shaanxi

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



Paperback ~~HK\$55~~ HK\$76  
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### Focus on Guangdong

An important gateway into China, the fertile Pearl River Delta of the southern province of Guangdong fans out from Guangzhou to the South China Sea and borders Hong Kong and Macao. The province's natural scenic spots include the limestone pinnacles of Zhaoqing's Seven Star Crag, the red sandstone of Danxia Mountain, and the volcanic beauty of Xiqiao Mountain. The capital, Guangzhou, offers plenty of history in its museums, temples, mosques and old colonial buildings.



Paperback ~~HK\$55~~ HK\$76  
Hard cover ~~HK\$150~~ HK\$120

### Focus on Guizhou

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.

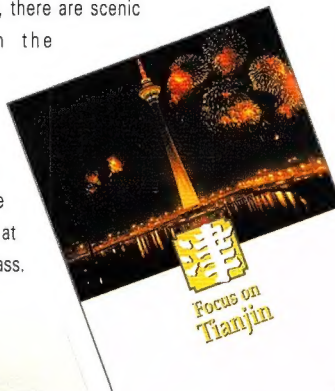




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## Focus on Tianjin

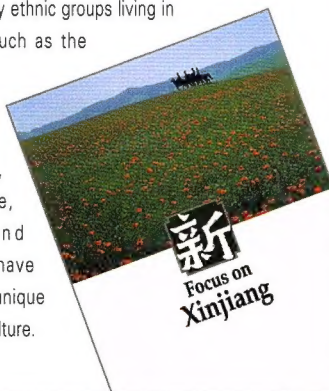
Tianjin, one of the four municipalities under direct Central Government administration, is an important industrial and commercial centre of China and the biggest port in the north. The history of the city can be found in its Ancient Culture Street, 100-year-old Western-style buildings, Opera Museum and Mazu Temple. Besides the TV Tower and the Haihe River in the city, there are scenic spots in the outskirts, including the Dule Temple and the Great Wall at Huangya Pass.



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## Focus on Xinjiang

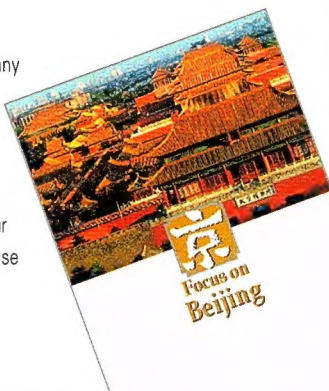
On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, which provide tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem imbedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak — the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique colourful culture.



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## Focus on Beijing

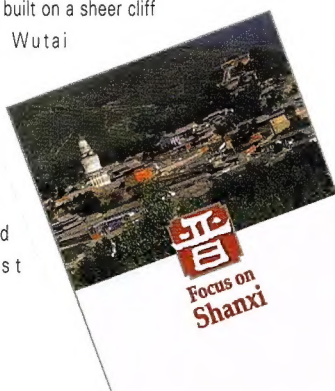
Beijing is a metropolis of everlasting charm. There are simply too many captivating things to see, to experience and to taste in this grand city with both old glamour and new mobility. There are historical sites such as the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and the Ming Tombs; there are also many scenic spots in its outskirts. Recently, tours have been organised for visitors to taste the real Beijing flavour of life — touring the small back lanes, having tea in a traditional-style teahouse and enjoying the Peking Opera.



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## Focus on Shanxi

Shanxi Province, one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilisation, has impressive ancient architecture and a wealth of well-preserved Buddhist temples, monasteries and grottoes. Among the most famous are the Yungang Grottoes containing some of China's oldest sculptures and Buddhist art, the Yongle Palace, the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Monastery built on a sheer cliff and the Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous sacred Buddhist lands.



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## Focus on Guangxi

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the varied traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



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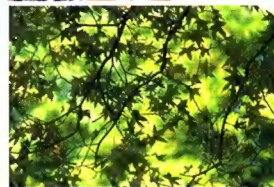
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